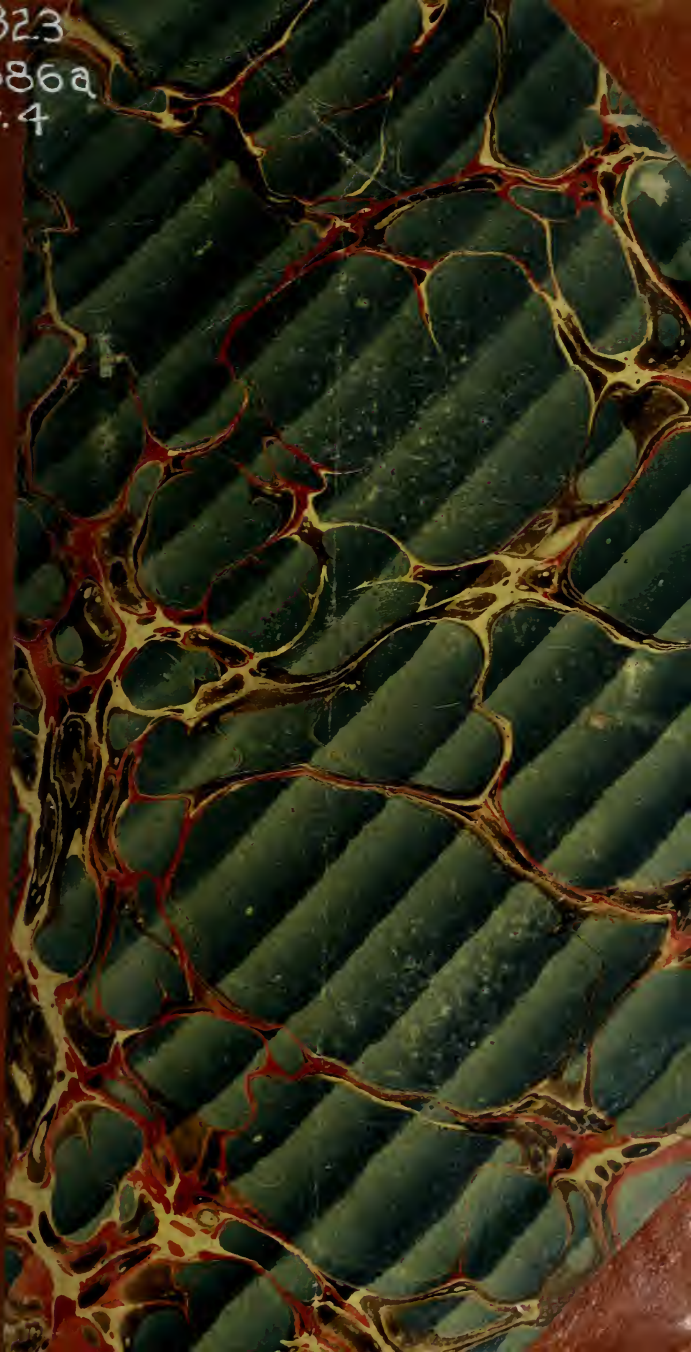



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ARDENT;
A TALE OF WINDSOR FOREST,
IN THE
Nineteenth Century.

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF HIS MOST GRACIOUS
MAJESTY,

GEORGE THE FOURTH.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

"The great business of all is virtue and wisdom."
Page 306 of Locke's 14th Edition on Education.

VOL. IV.

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ARDENT;

A TALE OF WINDSOR FOREST.

CHAPTER I.

THE last chapter was principally metaphorical, or intended to be such ; partly revealing, and in part concealing, the future destiny of the heroine.

We now come to plain narrative again, as being a less exercise to the mind of the reader, as well as the writer.

Not to tire our readers with multiplied digressions, we now revert to the lady, upon her return from the magistrate, with the full conviction that our hero would be detained in durance vile, until next Quarter Sessions; for so her privy counsellor and legal adviser, Lawyer Rapine, had assured her, and, with the becoming reliance of a client, she believed him, for **her** resentment against Ardent obscured all reason and percep-

tion. One thing she was resolved to accomplish, and that was his ruin, in the attempting of which she ran into the greatest danger of involving her own.

On her return to her own house, she was both surprised and confounded that the worthy magistrate had permitted Ardent liberty, to seek his sureties, and that he had driven back to the village for that purpose ; this puzzled and perplexed her, as it differed very materially from the assurance given her by Lawyer Rapine, of the immediate confinement of her victim in the county gaol. She still had a hope remaining that he would get no one to be bound for him, and with that hope and expectation she remained satisfied for the present, waiting events as they should disclose themselves, and resolving to be guided by those circumstances that should warrant the further prosecution of our hero, or relinquishing it altogether. Her affairs were in this dubious state, and her mind agitated like the waves of a troubled sea, when Ardent drove by with his friends, who had zealously and kindly come forward to his rescue, and saved him at least from the perils of imprisonment at this juncture.

But to fully comprehend the sentiments of the lady, and her man-servant, at one and the same time, it will be necessary to relate a conversation that passed between them, for her servant was her coachman upon this memorable occasion, and had driven his mistress to the magistrate, a distance of twelve miles and back, the same day, time enough, as it appears, to see Ardent on his return to the magistrate with his friends, as before mentioned.

“ I have had a bustling day of it, William,” said the lady to her factotum.

“ Yes, you have, Ma’am, or the dickins is in it.”

“ But Ardent must go to gaol, that’s certain ; don’t you think so, William?”

“ Mayhap not, and mayhap he may.”

“ Don’t you think it very likely?”

“ I don’t know what to think of it at all, Ma’am, not I ; and what it is all about, I cannot tell, no not if even people stop me in the street, to ask me about it, as they frequently do.”

“ Why, you can say he broke the window.”

“ But did he not send the glazier next morning to mend it? I thought what would come of it. Mr. Ardent and you were at one time almost

always together,—walking, riding, dining, tea-parties, and what not. You were never easy, unless he was with you, and you with him; and did I not fetch him frequently to you when in fits? I don't understand it at all; not I, or what to make of it. What with fits and other ailments, you kept on inviting him, or sending for him, until he fell in love with you, and now it seems you have too much of it, and sorry enough you are for it, I dare say. I thought as how there would be a blow-up before long. People say you are in love with him, and he is in love with you, and that you will soon be friends again."

"No, never again: I will drive him from the place, or he shall drive me."

"See, Ma'am, talk of the devil, there he is, sure enough! Why, there goes Ardent back again in the same post-chaise that took him and the constables to the magistrates; there they go, the Reverend Mr. Aimwell and Mr. Foresight with him; they are gone, to my thinking, to set him free from your tanglements. They have but just this moment passed the window."

"What! the Reverend Mr. Aimwell and Mr. Foresight with Ardent? Then I am totally undone,

that is certain,—it is all over with me ; he is the eel I always said he was. Gracious heavens! gone with them who I thought were my friends. Lawyer Rapine has totally deceived me: he gave me his word and honour, he would send Ardent to gaol, until the quarter sessions. Who would have thought that he should have escaped me again? I thought I had caught him, so that he could not escape me, until I could have succeeded in driving him from the forest, or beyond the seas, where Lawyer Rapine promised to send him. What do you think of this, William? don't it surprise you very much?

“ I think, Ma'am, in my humble opinion, it is time you both had enough of it—such foolishness I never heard of in all my born days, not I ; it is like children's play—they play till they fall out, and so have you two, or the dickins is in it. I would not worry myself any more about it, if I was you, and I now gives you my honest opinion.”

“ I must advise with Lawyer Rapine, and hear what he has to say to all this, for I begin to be tired of such running about. Go, William, to-morrow morning, and tell Lawyer Rapine I want to speak with him without delay.”

“ Very well, Ma’am: I think as how you will get out of the frying-pan into the fire.”

“ So then I am to go upon this disagreeable errand,—I wish it may not prove worse than a fool’s errand, for I should be sorry to hear of your coming to any mishap,—you have always been a good mistress to me, and I cannot help wishing you would have no more to do with this same Lawyer Rapine. I don’t like the look of him, not I, and that is a piece of my mind.”

“ Leave me, William, leave me,” said the lady ; and William, finding his oratory only made his mistress sorrowful, left her, and the lady began to reproach herself with her cruelty to Ardent, and then again became as resentful against him as ever, and expressed herself much after the following manner : which are indications of a mind truly pained with conflicting passions.

“ O ! Ardent, your words are becoming prophetic ; but, to sooth my melancholy, I will sing the song you composed and gave to me, saying you thought it would suit me at no very distant period. Alas ! that time is now come.”

O! why do the hours, that once flew so fast,
So solemnly now flit away?
They make me reflect on wickedness past,
And remind me of going astray.
Bitter reflections, ye crowd on me now,
Why came ye not to me before?
Scalding tears would not now from these weeping eyes flow,
And my hopes have been mercy in store.
It's said God accepts repentance, though late,
If sincere from the heart it is given,
And gives the poor sinner a hope that her state
Will be pardon and mercy in heaven.

“I have a very great mind to relent, and forgive him, for his only fault has been in loving me too well. But I will first hear what Lawyer Rapine says,—he must know best.”

In this state of uncertainty was the silly and absurd woman, not to say wicked, as the Reverend Dr. Allworthy would very properly have said, debating with herself, until resentment again obtained the mastery over her, saying she had gone too far to recede.”

CHAPTER II.

TIME passed on without any interruption on either side: both prepared for hostilities, they were, to use the language of the historian, arranging the plan of disputation, as to what should be said or what should be done.

Ardent availed himself of the counsel of his twin-brother, who obtained all the information upon the subject, from lawyers older than himself, that could be procured against the grand day of trial for housebreaking, assault, and battery, and vindictive damages, as was to be apprehended. The defensive position was thought the safest by the two brothers, to watch the tigress in her first pouncing upon her prey, and throw her off by some violent jerk, or, by moving suddenly on one side, allow her to fall prostrate to the earth. Such was the ambuscade entered into between our hero and his brother the lawyer,—alike in age and by the same parents, and both equally anxious for the event.

The twin-brother of Ardent had been educated as an attorney, as his father intended when in childhood; and the younger brother, the hero of this history, was brought up to physic, and a pretty physical piece of business he made of it: disappointed his family's expectations of marrying suitable to their wishes and his own happiness; his prospects more or less blasted by the singularity of the adventure, the incidents of which became more and more intricate every day; with a woman for an antagonist, of the most unbridled resentment, aided and assisted as she was by one of the most crafty of lawyers. An epithet can scarcely be found sufficiently contemptible to mark the just indignation such a character is capable of raising in the mind. The profession, when discovering such characters, have caused their names to be crossed from their list, no longer deeming them honourable as gentlemen, nor suffering them to remain among them.

Such were the parties arranged in battle array: the unhappy woman, already subservient to her lawyer's pleasure, and the lawyer, vulture like, living upon her as his prey, with the expectation of sharing in the sale of her estate. But we will

now digress for a time. It is remarkable in history, that Socrates fell a victim to law in those days, for daring to speak the truth and defending it also. The same happened to Jesus Christ, who spoke in a figurative sense and in parables. Seneca and Cicero both lost their lives in the same cause, stemming, or endeavouring to stem, public abuse by their moral worth. Cato and Brutus did the same. The Gracchi also suffered martyrdom in the same cause, defending public liberty ; and shall it be complained of by Ardent that he is a fellow-sufferer with those great men ? Forbid it, heaven ! The church rewarded their founder with crucifixion, and it would be extraordinary indeed if Ardent should not meet with the same gratitude.

We will just glance at the second brother of our hero, who died about this time, in the twenty-second year of his age. He had finished his hospital education, when there was a demand made by government to the lecturers and hospital surgeons, for assistants to dress the wounded coming from the battle of Corunna, at Haslar Hospital. Such demand was mentioned in favourable terms by the lecturers, without any mention from them

of a pestilential fever that raged violently in that hospital. Many young men volunteered their services, and fell victims within a few days after to the disease, then raging with the utmost violence, and the brother of our hero with them. It was the slaughter or sacrifice of the lives of individuals to the misrepresentations of the lecturers; for, without the deception, who would have volunteered? not those who did. But such is a common occurrence, and why need I confirm it by stating the brother of our hero died on the eleventh day after his arrival, with many others? It is no doubt the duty of government to provide for the comforts of the sick and wounded. But what had become of their own medical officers? Had they forsaken their posts with the dexterity of foxes, under pretence of ill health, upon finding the nature of the fever to be highly dangerous, and sending hundreds of young men to a premature grave? The fever is said to have slaughtered nearly as many as the sword of the enemy. Instead of bark and port wine being early and frequently administered, calomel was depended upon, and calomel was the treacherous servant of the army that slew its thousands and tens of

thousands. It is a melancholy and painful reflection, that among so many able men, exercised in the army practice, none should have thought of properly treating the disease. Calomel will do well in inflammatory fever, but not in typhus ; it breaks down the constitution instead of upholding it. Instead of general or undefined rules, precise and definite ones should be pursued, such as prompt measures and decisive conduct ; let them simplify, if they please, but not destroy by simplicity, or a reliance upon that dangerous medicine—omnipotent in inflammation, but destructive in typhus, or low or putrid fever, unless given within the first twenty-four hours. Instead of young men, raw recruits from the hospital, the most able of the profession should have been sent down, as the hospital surgeons themselves, from the London hospitals, or those who had seen extensive practice, and who practically and experimentally knew how to resist low fever in their own persons, by a full supply of wine and brandy in their stomachs and bowels, and that to a plentitude as almost to endanger intoxication ; also with camphor and acids of all descriptions, fumigations of various kinds, and other requisites, as

cleanliness and ventilation. Such should have been the conduct, but what was the practice?—It was another Walcheren affair, and the soldiers and the young surgeons died by cart-loads, while the older surgeons, snug in their palaces, or making their fortunes in private practice, looked on, and backed the raw recruits, and suffered them to perish by scores or by hundreds. The mind should not thus have been taken by surprise: to dress wounded soldiers is one thing, to stem pestilential fever is another. Such deception on the part of government, or on the part of medical officers, should be reprobated. In such a recurrence of pestilential fever, only make it known, thousands would volunteer their services at a guinea a day, while the fever lasted, for less would not be competent to supply the necessaries of life, for the purpose of resisting contagion and rewarding the skilful medical practitioner; and no medical man's services should be accepted who is under thirty years of age, for the attendance upon such fevers. One half the number of such efficient men would be more than equivalent to double the number of young and inexperienced pupils from the hospital, who have not reduced their

theory to practice ; and it indicates a want of that attention to human life on the part of the government, which is due to the young medical surgeon and the soldier. To hold out false lights in the army practice, is attended with the same pernicious and destructive effects as to hold out false lights to the mariner at sea. What is the consequence?—Shipwreck. The same happens to the soldier.

These observations and comments are due to the manes of a lost brother, and that others may profit by his overthrow at a period when life is said to be of most value—just springing into future usefulness, that they may not be led like victims to the shambles for slaughter, through chicanery and deceitful manœuvring, to inveigle the ignorant, while the ability of the profession stand on one side, and see others become the inmates of the early tomb, and whom they have, by misrepresenting the nature of the malady, consigned to an early grave. If such reproof is not sufficient, more practised pens should take up the cause of humanity, and bring not this blot upon the annals of England in future. To want humanity is to want sense, proving the old adage to be true,—“ The blind lead the blind, and both

fall into an early grave," not from their own ill conduct, but from the want of sufficient consideration on the part of others. Medical science, like all others, is progressive; wisdom is of slow growth in any department of civil life, and particularly so in the medical. The same is applicable to the medical department of the army: either that government countenances the deception practised on ignorant young men, who know nothing of the chicanery of the art of governing others by misrepresentation, or when apprised of the danger, it is too late to recede; the storm is braved, the tempest of contagion or infection, which are nearly the same in their effects, is endeavoured to be stopped by an alarmed mind, or one not prepared to resist its ravaging influence, and particularly so after the study through a long winter, with spirits broken down or depressed by the impure air always attendant upon dissection, and by other professional attentions and avocations.

CHAPTER III.

THE bustle of legal warfare was going on in the court of Reigate, about thirty miles from the scene of action, or romantic village where the assault, as it was termed, was first committed, by the breaking of a pane of glass in the door of the lady's house. The reverse of good fortune in both parties we have now to record, who were each watching the other's movements with a zeal worthy of a better cause; the one to oppress, and the other to defend. It was the hawk and the sparrow in combat; or, if a stronger simile is required, it was the vulture and the leveret contending for the superiority. The chances were so strong against Ardent, that on the side of the lady it was said to be as an orchard to an apple, or as the globe to an orange. Such are the glorious uncertainties of the law in this civilized country, that money is supposed to weigh more in the scales of justice than merit; and had Ardent been destitute of the means of defending

himself, or a poorer man, he must have been overthrown; so great are the advantages of wealth above poverty in this land of boasted freedom, with its happy laws and institutions! But it is not proper to anticipate events,—sufficient to the day is the evil thereof; and happy is he that requires neither law nor justice, from an uncertain, and at best an equivocal mode of deciding, where the cost exceeds the injury sustained in as many instances as a million to one; and a sprat placed in a lawyer's hands is made to appear as big as a salmon. And, what is very extraordinary, nearly all lawyers see it through the same magnifying-glasses, and keep on disputing about it until what was originally the value of a cheese-mite actually costs the purchaser of that mite many tens of pounds, and sometimes hundreds or thousands; but this arises from the glorious uncertainty of the law, and one lawyer fees the other to say it is a sprat or salmon, as suits the different views and interests of the parties contending.

The court of Reigate was, as usual, attended by judges, counsellors, and the public officers of the court, the Yes and No men, with crier, town-

sergeant, and the silly public, thronging as in a fair or at an assize-time, which period was now arrived. At the Swan Inn, in the same town, sat the heroine of this history, in a private room, and at the same inn arrived our hero and his brother, the lawyer.

“What is it you recommend, my dear brother?” said our hero.

“To keep quiet and watch her movements. No anger like a woman’s, although they frequently do themselves more mischief than their victims.”

While the brother of Ardent was speaking, Ardent himself suddenly exclaimed,—“Talking of the lady, why there she is, and alone, in the next room! I will go and speak to her, and try once more if I can soften her resentment against me, before we proceed to extremities with each other, which may overwhelm both, for it is too serious to be considered as a jest, and yet not sufficiently important to merit the very gravest of all considerations.” And, so saying, he left his brother, and introduced himself to the lady by the following prefatory harangue, so as to secure her attention and bring the subject in dispute to a

termination in the shortest period of time, before her attorney could join her again, who had left the room for only a few minutes ; the interval was laid hold of as a favourable and auspicious moment to put an end to the legal warfare which threatened to overwhelm both parties with shame and disgrace :

“ Dear madam, allow me to suggest the possibility of your being wrongly advised, and to request, as a particular favour, that you will stop proceedings, that yours and my own character may be no longer the public sport : we shall be derided by the multitude either as fools or as mad people. Silly we may have been up to the present period, but by stopping in time, the world having nothing to laugh at, will cease to amuse themselves at our individual expense.”

“ No,” said the lady ; “ you began, Ardent, and I will finish.”

Lawyer Rapine, at this critical juncture, entered the room. His astonishment and anger were excessive : he exclaimed,—“ You here ! What do I see ? Begone,—you shall not speak to my client. Mrs. Freelove, if you speak to Ardent again, I will drop your cause.”

“ I have just told Mr. Ardent, Mr. Rapine, that as he began I will finish.”

Ardent then left Mrs. Freelove and her lawyer together, on finding all overtures of a peaceable nature completely unsuccessful, and joined his brother in the next room.

“ I have been foiled again, my dear brother, by that great enemy of hers and mine, her lawyer, who, as you know, is called Rapine, as a distinction peculiarly appropriate to his rapacity and unfair conduct, taking every advantage to mislead the ignorant and unwary in his special pretensions to rectitude. They insist on war, saying, as I began she will finish; the lawyer is of the same way of thinking, so that it is useless to expect any forbearance from either. Besides, as the lawyer has been already successful in his influence over her person and pocket, what can be expected but a perseverance in resistance, when either motive is sufficient to influence an abandoned and profligate man, singly; but, when united, makes any overtures on my part not only nugatory, but even subjects myself to affronts and insults. An amicable arrangement is out of the question: she seems besotted with revenge, as a drunkard with

liquor. It is the weakness and infirmity of human nature to be so perverse, and I know not which is most to blame, or which my greatest enemy; but of the two I think the lawyer to be the greatest impediment, for he appears to be as apprehensive of losing his prize as a pirate would be of the loss of a merchant vessel laden with gold and silver and other valuables. So does he estimate his captured lady, which it must be admitted is a great prize to a man of no principle, honour, integrity, or virtue, and which he has obtained, as he would term it, by the chances of war or the accidents of life; and the burden of their song is the same as usual,—‘ You began, I will finish,’ which is the word to fall on and knock each other to pieces as much as possible. It is fairly now a battle of the purse. The merits of the question seem nearly at an end, neither expecting much good or harm to happen in that respect; and, indeed, the subject is so frivolous, that it amazes me not a little that such claims for justice are made, when there is so little to dispute about, or to keep the mind suspended on, as to the merits or demerits of the transaction, even for a moment; as to **the** malignancy of the motive in-

ducing the lady, and the interested ones which instigate her law-agent, there can be no doubt.— Suppose we now advise with counsel?”

“ I think it very proper,” said the brother; “ let us seek one of the gentlemen of the long robe. Here is one.”

To this Ardent assented, and related his case, with which the reader is already acquainted.

Upon hearing the whole of the circumstances, “ Mr. Ardent,” said the gentleman, “ I think you are unfortunate in falling into bad hands. The lady, there can be no doubt, is a woman of art; and, to avoid a great deal of unpleasantness to both parties, I recommend you to kiss and make it up.”

“ I have spoken to her very lately, sir, even so late as within the last hour, to request she would stop proceedings; but she will not, and Lawyer Rapine threatens to drop her cause if he sees her speak to me again.”

“ In that case you must go on with it, and sicken the lady by expenses and trouble; besides, you bring it nearer home, where the merits of the case are better understood, and where you will in all likelihoods have a jury in your favour. I will

move the court to traverse, on the plea that you are not ready."

"We are greatly obliged to you, sir, for your sensible opinion, and will follow your suggestions," said the brothers, at the same time presenting the counsellor with his fee, which he well merited; and Ardent and his brother had reason afterwards to congratulate themselves upon his judicious counsel, thinking, however rascally some lawyers may be, the bar is free from the taint of ungentlemanly conduct.

The brothers then retired to their room in the inn, to enjoy their refreshments. The affair looked less serious the nearer it was approached; and the lady and her attorney were petrified and confounded for the second time. Thus it will appear obvious to all discerning readers, that a good cause, or at all events not a malicious one, is very conducive to success, even in our British courts of judicature; for although an English jury may decide against the least offending party, yet they are well known most frequently to decide according to merit, and to the protection of the party injured.

CHAPTER IV.

IT was in the interim between the holding of the court at Reigate and the traversing of the action to the court at Guildford, that Ardent's mind became harassed by that sort of activity called re-action, or reverberating upon itself. It was that kind of restless activity indicating a superior mind, when well directed; but, from being dragged as it were out of its proper channel of thought by inferior agency or cunning, of which he had hitherto a very imperfect idea, he became their puppet, for he has since learned, to his most painful sorrow, that there are two springs of activity propelled by different impulses, precisely opposed to each other, which is difficult to define by any individuals but those accustomed to think, examine, and separate divisible actions by divisible means. Sometimes this requires the experience of age, and that long-accustomed activity of thought called by most writers a superior genius, indicative of a mind that thinks

upon given points, far beyond the powers of men in general. These apparently indivisible divisible powers, or governing springs to human activity, are directed by reason and good sense, where reason and good sense meet the same; but when opposed by the opposite principle of cunning, which is only the shadow or counterfeit part of wisdom, indicative indeed of an active mind, but a mind directed by wrong principles, as that of persisting in one train of thought or reflection, which is opposed to common sense and all human understanding of what is right and proper.

That Ardent should fall into the first, which is called eccentricity, from inexperience, was naturally enough to be expected, from his impatience of control, like the race-horse, though emulous to reach the goal, makes a slight deviation to the right or left, while others, or his opponents, break through the course, and arrive before him. That is opposing the art of cunning, which consists in the tricks and contrivances of this world, to the art of wisdom, which is the profoundest of all the human sciences, when properly directed. But there is a peculiarity or eccentricity which

resembles, for a season, to superficial observers, the debility of mind common to a madman or a fool. To that very eccentricity or deviation from the regular routine of every-day practice, founded upon experience of the past, may be ascribed the consequence which caused these pages to be written, and which arose from a want of information on that particular subject, and which was attended with such singular inconveniences afterwards; proving that cunning, for a season, artfully and ably directed, is more than a match for inexperienced wisdom, which was evinced about this particular period of this history, and is what is often mistaken by the uninformed for the action of a madman or the indications of a weak mind; that is, when a man opposes his own interest by endeavouring to arrive by a shorter route to the same end by less costly means, which, by the by, often proves the most retrograde, and involves the individual so acquiring experience in the greatest of calamities, by falling into the arts and pit-falls of the crafty, rather than depending upon the strait line of road for reaching the same object, by those defined means of policy pointed out by experience and the general

intercourse of human life, called a knowledge of the world, and which evils are frequently caused by the law's delay wearying the faculties of the mind, as in our hero. Making out the old saying to be true, "The wise man followeth counsel," the impatient is involved in his own difficulties, created by his want of information and too much dependence upon himself, which the cunning part of mankind are ever upon the watch for, and which is their element, as much so as the watery element is to fishes, and they may very properly be called mermans, or mermaids, depending upon the difference of sex; and if they drag you into their element, which is cunning or knavery, you may plunge for a lifetime ere you extricate yourself from the pernicious consequence, and which they laugh at, as dexterous knaves usually do at all mischief of their own creating, when tending to their own advantage, but frequently in the long run to their own injury.

Now it is precisely upon this reasoning that our hero foundered in a sea of trouble,—that is, got out of his depth in political or worldly knowledge, and was engulfed by chicanery as successfully as

if he had been overwhelmed by the waters of the deep.

The wise man follows the experience of age ; the inconsiderate young man is guided by his own reason, or rather folly, which is incompetent to conduct him through the intricacies and difficulties of this world, perverted as it is, and too frequently by the counterfeit of what it ought to be. To illustrate this reasoning by an example, we will introduce our hero again upon the stage, who was not satisfied with leaving very well alone, but endeavoured to make it better, and foundered, or was flung by his own reasoning into that gulf which had been so long yawning to overwhelm him ; namely, a woman's rage.

CHAPTER V.

THE state of inactivity and uncertainty was attended with more danger to Ardent than the actual conflict of the parties, as it gave him time to think how he could avoid the impending danger by the shortest means. Caution and circumspection seemed entirely to have forsaken him, and especially when on such dangerous ground as that of risking a conversation with the enemy, or rather with the son of the infatuated woman, who was involving herself and him in a premature, if not a premeditated destruction, taking and following the counsel of an artful knave of an attorney, instead of the counsel of those better disposed to befriend them both.

Further explanation is necessary previous to entering upon the subject, and that is to define still further the conduct of Ardent, which, although ill directed, yet had a right principle as the basis of his action. The means were injudicious, it must be admitted, and associated him

with the child of folly, through his total ignorance of what he was about, from his reliance upon principle to sustain him through the conflict resulting from the assertion of what was right; but he placed his confidence upon a foundered jade, so that, when he pushed her to her utmost speed, she sunk under him; but the better to understand the nature of right principle, it may be necessary for the reader's more ready apprehension and comprehension to compare it to a capital fleet horse of the swiftest breed, formed of the best blood in the land—that is, the purest actions and rules of right conduct. But then this was some centuries since; but now this famous horse, called human or correct principles, has been in the process of time and in the lapse of ages so much in use as a stalking-horse, or rather a pack-horse, for the conveyance of every man's infirmities, from the king to the beggar, that it has quite altered its paces, and it is now no longer that fine animal it used to represent; perfect in form, grace, and every similitude to perfection, but has quite altered its character: it is now loaded with the sins of generations long since passed away, but who have left their imperfec-

tions as legacies to posterity, by the warping and distorting of principle itself, that to a superficial observer, like our hero, relying upon the soundness of the hack, she, jade like, threw him into the mire.

Now this was not so much our hero's fault, as the tricks of the various riders who had bestrode the back of the horse called human principles, said to have been of divine origin, but now, alas ! so grossly imperfect as no longer to be recognised by the ignorant, as Ardent may have been considered, while trying his experiments according to original rules, and not by such as now regulate the conduct of society. And it will be found eventually that no pack-horse has ever been so ill used, altered, and corrected by the perverse generations that have passed away ; indeed, so much that it can no longer be known by the superficial observer as the same animal that existed from the earliest era in the life of man, and, if report or tradition is not in error, must have been a resident of Paradise during the first days of the patriarchal era, or rather the days of the first parents of mankind. The fair and beautiful Eve, it is supposed, began first to spoil its paces by

riding all on one side of right principle at the time she eat the apple, and thus, mounted on the wrong side of right principle, dragged poor Adam after her to the confines of this world ; where the said human faculty, styled correct principle, has been ever since feeding upon the imperfect pastures, as those of ignorance, bigotry, chicanery, and rottenness of this world, in common with all other hobby-horses. Now, how was it possible for Ardent, a young man about twenty-five years of age, to have a competent knowledge of the said defects, imperfections, deceits, treacheries, and other inconsistencies in human action, called human principles, but which are, in fact, anything but principles, although in a hobby-horse patronized by the clergy themselves, and fed and pampered in the stalls of their cathedrals, until it can scarcely be said to have one hair left in its tail or mane that can be properly considered to belong to the said steed—called the true hobby-horse, or human principle as it existed with our first parents in Paradise?—for it is now become so sorry a jade of a hack as to admit depraved persons of all ranks upon its back, one after another—some climbing up by the tail ; others, being of

more importance, lay hold of the mane ; and the former dignitaries of the earth seated themselves, one at a time, it is presumed, or altogether, between the ears of the said animal, which they had a very just right to do, as the most eminent should, no doubt, sit in the loftiest places.

Now, gentle reader, how was Ardent, with only perhaps fifty books in his library, to come to the knowledge of all this? It would be the acquirement of a lifetime, and, perhaps, require the consulting not of fifty books alone, but of fifty times fifty, or twenty-five hundred volumes at least, to get at a true knowledge of human things, to distinguish them properly from those that are divine. Now, it is not insisted upon at the present day that Ardent's knowledge of human life is superior to others ; only a stronger impression has been made upon his mind in those departments he himself has trod ; including his mounting the great hobby-horse of antiquity called human and divine principles, changed, as it is now become, into a sorry jade. The same horse threw many eminent men both before and since, and even the great whore of Babylon herself, when she attempted to mount it, and fairly kicked the same

profligate and abandoned reprobate out of these dominions, and placed her again on the seven hills; where she is now said to reside, with all the host of cardinals worshipping her and kissing her toes.

These loose hints are only thrown out, by the way, to excuse the simplicity of our fellow-traveller, Ardent, in his peregrinations through Windsor Forest, a royal domain, and the seat of our most august monarch, the father and defender of his people.

This great horse, called human principle, was, as before observed, founded upon divine origin, but so shamefully abused as nearly to resemble another great horse, also of ancient origin and coeval with man himself, called evil principles, or sin: but the less said upon such a being the better, only observing, by the way, the present race of human principles appear to have been the produce of the two great horses celebrated in all antiquity, and known in those days by the name of good and bad principles, or, in other words, good and evil, or sin and godliness—the one originating, by all the information Ardent could ever learn, through the agency of the devil, as its sire, and

the other had its origin from God the Father Almighty, maker of the Heavens and the earth. Now, upon the first horse, or sin itself, was mounted 'Squire Rapine, with the lady and her son. But the rencontre of these singular characters, thus mounted on their several hobby-horses, must be reserved for another chapter; suffice it to say, it required the research of twenty years to learn that there were any such horses in existence, but now it is indisputable,—in fact, nothing can again prevent Ardent believing to the contrary.

This allegory is only made use of as some extenuation or apology for the great blunder our hero made, about this time, by calling the lady of his former affections by too true a name; but such is the respect of the clergy of these dominions for even the frailties of the fair and softer sex, that they, unknown to our hero at that time, still covered them with their mantle and sacerdotal robe; which would be more excusable in the military character, but certainly less defensible, as the author conceives, in the priesthood of the Protestant Church of England, as by law established.

CHAPTER VI.

ARDENT used to be compared, by his former mistress, to an eel, so slippery she used to say he was ; however this may be, she caught her eel at last, as she did at first, by opposite principles, indeed, but equally effectual. The former entanglements of his affections have been freely discussed, communicated, and narrated, in the manner they actually occurred. His last entanglement in her snare of revenge, for his breach of her confidence, is now to be related. It was accomplished in the following manner :—Ardent pondered and reflected with himself repeatedly, as to the possibility of young Mr. Freelove being fully acquainted with his mother's proceedings, and the strong intimacy said to be subsisting between herself and Lawyer Rapine, as well as of the consequences likely to follow, should his mother be defeated in the next action, which probability was the greater, as the cause was delayed and brought nearer to their own habi-

tations, and our hero would possibly be triumphant over her, which he did not wish, but would rather conciliate the affair than go on with the action.

Such was the state of Ardent's mind, indicating some new adventure, exploit, or enterprise, worthy of commemoration, if it was only as a warning to others. He resolved to learn from young Freelove himself, now a youth of about eighteen years of age, if he was apprised of his mother's danger, and, consequently, his own, involved as it was in her welfare ; and, as it was his interest to prevent the last catastrophe his mother could experience, by a public verdict against her, Ardent conceived it to be no more than justice to the young man to prevent the mischief occurring, as none could be benefitted, let the cause terminate how it would, but Lawyer Rapine ; who so zealously promoted the suit, as it was generally said, for his own convenience, rather than to redress the injury supposed to be sustained by the lady herself.

That this would have been a wise step, had it been undertaken by a common friend, was, perhaps, unquestionable ; but our hero, with his

heated and agonized feelings, was the last person in the world who should be trusted with such a mission, lest his impetuous temper and zeal should mar the very plot he had so ingeniously contrived, of overthrowing the influence of Rapine, and, by so doing, preserving the woman of his former sympathy from that ruin that seemed inevitably to await her. It was accomplished in rather a hasty manner, not precisely waiting for the suitable opportunity of speaking to the young man when alone, but taking the first that offered ; and, as Ardent's house overlooked that part of the village in which was situated the lady's bowery residence, he by chance beheld young Mr. Free love walking arm-in-arm with Lawyer Rapine down the village. Such an opportunity immediately struck Ardent, who thought it should not be lost, and he therefore promptly resolved to speak to him : alas ! for all parties but the lawyer, it was an imprudent speech indeed. He addressed the young man, accompanied as he was by his mother's attorney-general :—" I am both grieved and surprised, Mr. Free love, to see you yield your consent to the prosecution now pending between your mother and myself, which must end in both of

our discomfitures, and the very triumph of which is unworthy of either to obtain over the other. Stop proceedings in this law action, and you and your mother may yet be safe."

To this the young man replied, " You began, Ardent, and we will finish it for you ;" then, sneeringly, added, " Ho ! ho ! you are tired, are you ?"

" You wrong me, Mr. Freelove," said Ardent, indignantly, " if you think I ill advise you or your mother. I have had the best opinions from sensible persons, and all declare that the present law action will be injurious to both parties, as it is evidently a frivolous and vexatious suit, got up from the interested motives of Lawyer Rapine."

" What do you and your party know of our motives ?" replied Lawyer Rapine ; " what is it to you ?—Come, Freelove, your mother is waiting dinner for us. Stop proceedings, indeed ! a likely story—come, Freelove, hear no more."

Ardent now began to lose all patience, and said, " Freelove, your mother is going the wrong way to improve her character ; for, if the worst comes to the worst, I shall be under the necessity of saying more than is otherwise agreeable to myself."

The young man was still unmoved—"Do you think, Ardent," said he, "that Lawyer Rapine does not know what should be done? I tell you, we are certain of the cause, for Lawyer Rapine says so."

Ardent, no longer able to bridle his resentment, and not knowing there existed any obstacle to his speaking the truth, exclaimed, in an agony which little anticipated what would follow from the guardians of morals and the defenders of the marriage vow, "Freelove, you are a pander, and your mother's a w——!"

"I thank you, young man," retorted the artful lawyer, with a Sardonic grin, "more grist to my mill—I am your witness, Freelove. And I will place you, fiery sir, in the Ecclesiastical Court of Doctors' Commons; I will teach you how to speak of ladies of character again—just what we wanted—now, then, we have you in earnest—come, Freelove, we will go and drink a bottle of wine with your mother, and tell her we have caught him at last. Good morning, Mr. Ardent—come, Freelove, we have him sure enough;—you know not the importance of the word you have spoken;—come, Freelove, we will now join your mother in triumph, and pass round an extra bottle upon

this important occasion, which will retrieve your mother's character and give her ample satisfaction and revenge." Having said this, they returned.

Ardent having said the word, and as the word was the truth, had too much respect for his own veracity to rescind it, especially as there was no other witness or individual near : had there been, he would have been too cautious to have imputed that name to a woman for whom he once entertained the most unbounded esteem.

On our hero's return to his own house, his self-reproach was considerable ; instead of benefitting the unhappy woman, as he had intended, he had made affairs infinitely worse ; it was now that she must destroy all her remaining character in endeavouring to save it. By endeavouring to save a part she had now lost the whole ; for Lawyer Rapine was sure to improve the opportunity, and thus apparently make himself seem not only useful but necessary.

CHAPTER VII.

“The sweetest flowers their odours shed
In silence and alone;
And wisdom’s hidden fount is fed
By minds to fame unknown.”

In times remote, kings could neither read or write, and the philosopher, in consequence, was subjected to a suspicion in many cases at once dangerous and dishonourable; to use the language of Coleridge, the real teachers and discoverers of truth were exposed to the hazard of fire and faggot—a dungeon being the best shrine that was vouchsafed to a Roger Bacon or a Gallileo.

Our knight-errant in moral principles had evinced a degree of hardihood and indiscretion seldom heard of in modern times, for such is the courtesy usually shown to the fair sex, even if a little reflected upon by the observations and comments of mankind, that they are not openly traduced, but on the most urgent occasions or from

the greatest of provocations. That our hero was pained more considerably, or equally so with the lady herself, may be inferred, for no knight of romance, in ancient or modern story, ever was uncourteous to the fair in affairs of gallantry for any long continuance, and, if so, it would have been considered as a stain upon his escutcheon; for, however great the injury sustained from the delicate sex, common politeness has always secured them a favourable reception among all men of tender sensibilities and refined manners. It is impossible to extenuate the imprudence of Ardent or justify him in any degree, for the impetuosity of his resentment at the wrong, foul, and malignant accusation which they made against him of an intention to commit a personal assault; or those aspersions attempted to be thrown upon his character, by artifice the most complicated and combined he had ever experienced or witnessed. The full extent of the injury he did her he was at the time unconscious of himself, as he did not foresee that Lawyer Rapine, under pretence of vindicating her character, would involve her and her son in still greater ruin, as well as annoy himself, which, by the by, was the least

part of the dreaded consequences in the baneful calamity.

As a true knight of La Mancha, or of any other equally renowned and celebrated place in history, was never known to be guilty of such an indiscretion to the sex, his atonement should necessarily be equally singular, to compensate for the affront and as a balm to heal the wounds of offended dignity, in asserting that it was at all possible, or even probable, that a lady of her sanctity of manners and decorum could, even in imagination only, have divested herself of her widowed weeds or otherwise broken her vows of chastity. Casuits in maiden purity, virgin innocence, and other flowery epithets due to virginity and the sacred obligations of the marriage compact, would say—had either of these sacred and vestal fires been invaded or infringed upon, it would have been the less surprising that the holy and pious fathers of the church should have condescended to consult their gowns and wigs, and decree the awful response of fate or the will of Divine Providence. But this is anticipating events, and as our hero committed himself in the opinion of his paramour, so must he be answer-

able to that tribunal whom he so unhandsomely offended, both as a gentleman and a true knight, who came into the forest, as it would seem, to seek adventures and redress the injuries of distressed damsels ; and, as he had the folly to fancy the palace of his mistress an enchanted castle, while her idea of chivalry, not keeping pace with the usual courtesy due to knights'-errant in former days, did, by mistake, conceive him to be a troublesome meddling fellow, and rewarded him for the pains he had taken in her behalf, in asserting she was the most immaculate and pure vestal the moon ever shone upon, notwithstanding all gainsay and disbelief to the contrary.

It is admitted, for the sake of truth, that her disinclination to be considered a divinity, or high-born deity, endowed with beauty and superlative attractions, was very much diminished since the commencement of our hero's acquaintance. It was not until after he had received considerable information of her being less than a divinity with the most superlative virtues, that the difference between our hero and his lovely Armida began to assume a different aspect. The days, and still less the nights, were not always found of the

brightest description, either in being favoured by the sun's genial rays or by the moon's propitious orb, both of which usually attend upon happy lovers. But not so now with our hero and his mistress of late days and evenings or nights; their days of rejoicing were past away—a melancholy eclipse intervened: first Mars, and then Saturn, with many constellations, disturbed his nights of repose, for Venus, the brightest of planets, and to whom he had associated his mistress as a divinity, was no longer visible: Saturn and his satellites obscured her genial influence, or, at the least, obstructed those attentions which are said to have a wonderful effect in softening the heart of the most obdurate female perversity, when directed under a right planet, or the favourable star which may have presided over his and her destiny. Alas! reader, that star had not been seen for many months, neither had the moon been favourable to a happy adjustment of differences; therefore, like a philosopher in the dark, he placed his candle under a bushel and no good resulted therefrom, but discordant caterwaulings that would disgrace a temple or meeting-place of the feline race.

Enigmas are dark, obscure, profound ;—the meaning of the foregoing gibberish is worthy of an ancient sybil, or a priestess of the Delphic temple of fame, that mystified their meanings to the ancient world as the author of these pages does to the modern.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON that memorable day when our hero was dragged from his bed by the constables, at the suit of his inamorata, the Reverend Mr. Aimwell, when returning with Ardent from the magistrate, accompanied by their friend Mr. Foresight, addressed our hero, while sitting in the chaise, and at a short distance from his house, by saying :

“ He hoped the present incident would not convert him into a misanthrope, as all women were not like Mrs. Freelove, who was angry at being regarded with too passionate a zeal. On the contrary, there were many women of the most amiable characters, and worthy of the most ardent attachment.”

This was spoken as an exhortation worthy of a clergyman of the church of England, and did him the greatest credit.

Ardent, with all the fervour of a heated imagination, had attended the Sessions House, at Guildford, four successive days ; neither had he

dared to eat more than the bare sustenance that nature required. He was faint with anxiety, despair, and fasting. His may have been considered an unhappy pilgrimage, controlled as he was, first by the shackles of infatuation in the artful net of her he still unfortunately loved, and although he was her victim, she was also his, and caught in the same foul net—the net of Lawyer Rapine.

Each time when on his way, which was twelve miles in distance, he overtook in a romantic part of the road leading through the forest to Guildford, a very respectable clergyman of the church of England, going to the same town, at an easy pace, mounted, as he was, upon a steady and sedate horse, while our hero with rapidity passed him, near the same spot, for four successive days, and whom, he afterwards learnt, was one of the most respectable magistrates on the bench.

The judge was Lord M——, a peer of the realm, and of great weight and influence in the county.

Ardent trembled with apprehension, his cheeks were pallid, for to the natural anxiety belonging to his situation, he had enjoined to himself rigid

abstinence, to clear his mind, and make him one of the keenest observers of passing events.

Fasting was a frequent practice with our hero, with two views, one to subdue the animal impetus of a warm constitution, and the other was to give free scope to the mind, unincumbered with pudding or fat, that he might not only see clearly with his real eyes, but with the eyes of his understanding also. His beverage was water, nearly all his life, until he came to be a resident in the forest, when he allowed himself half a pint of publican's ale, daily; and when excessively fatigued from horse exercise, extended the quantity to two half-pints in the twenty-four hours. He did not drink wine but upon very extraordinary occasions, as from the flattering influence of the lady, or some other great event.

In this subdued, ghost-like character, very ill befitting a lady's bower or the pugilistic ring, was our hero seen entering the hall at Guildford, for the fourth time;—the corporeal rebellion within his veins subdued, and his mental faculties on the alert, attentive to the judge and all that passed.

His perceptive feelings being thus stimulated

into activity by the most vigilant self-command, his ideas flowed with unusual rapidity: painful and of a sombre cast they were, for the most part, the lady and himself being about to descend into the arena, as gladiatorial combatants, each appointing a proxy well exercised in the science of wordy warfare, the stratagems of advancing or retreating, receding or pushing the advantage; and such another conflict between lovers was seldom witnessed, either in or out of court. It was in the true romantic cast of character and costume, as had prevailed for ages upon the like occasions, for ladies' love, but more frequently denoting a compulsory relinquishment of attachment, hard, very hard to be borne with; but to be thus lashed with the tongue of a scorpion, with three tails to his wig—it was almost insupportable; and the one having made the accusation for the plaintive lady, the advocate of Ardent then advanced to meet the charge: declamatory it certainly was; tropes, figures, and rhetorical language, flew about in all directions; the very hall and all the company perspired with heat, for hard were the blows given on both sides. It may be fairly said to have been a good stand-up fight,

giving blow for blow, until—how shall we relate the fact. The judge, counsellors, magistrates, jurymen, all persons present, including our hero himself, witnessed the defeat of—who? oh! that is reserved for the next chapter.

Reader, pause awhile, and meditate upon the awful state of the parties, contesting for the mastery, as who had the most sense, and who the least wisdom.

CHAPTER IX.

THE accusation and defence at this singular trial were certainly as extraordinary as were, perhaps, ever witnessed, or remain on record,—not in the records of the day, as represented by the short-hand writer, but by a pen, that was interested in the event—no one more so, with the exception only of the lady herself.

A son of the Emerald Isle, and one of the most eminent counsellors of the bar, was secured with a large retaining-fee by the lady's attorney-general, Lawyer Rapine, who at the same time gave him to understand the whole merits of the case, and that the defendant was the most passionate of lovers, and the lady one of the most voluptuous of women, so that it was impossible for the aged even to elude her seductive charms; and as for our hero, he had fallen headlong into the bowers of bliss, from which there was no way so likely of preventing a repetition of his former indiscretion, but from his (Lawyer Rapine's) own sedulous and

personal attentions, aided as he was by the black art of law-making, for the especial purpose of excluding from the fairy land of this most fascinating of ladies, the most enterprising of lovers, and the most notorious zealot in the monopoly of love and seductive influence, that the nineteenth century could produce.

Thus armed with information *à priori*, he prepared himself for the lists of championship, and certainly no tilt or tournament for ladies' love could have been disputed with more gallantry, excepting indeed, as must always be excepted, the energy of our hero himself, in the cause of personal attractions; for it was no uncommon thing with him, as it appears, to form a combination of reasoning which led him even to a *coup-de main* upon her person and premises, or, what the military phrase is upon the like occasions, "taking her fortress by storm."

It is true the assault commenced in the rear of her house, and a bombardment with pebbles was the consequence, which broke the pane of glass at the back part of it, for which the present action was brought.

The champion of the fair sex digested the nuts

he had cracked, and fairly felt the animating effects of their cordial influence throughout his animal frame. He stroked his beard—he felt his manhood rising into warmth—his gown he shook over his shoulders, and about his ears, as a lion his mane, when preparing for the combat; he elevated his brows, and fire flashed from his eyes, his nostrils became distended, the colour of scarlet mounted into his cheeks, for indeed he was a great barrister,—had written volumes, his name was known, and he was famous throughout the land.

Such was the antagonist our hero had to dread and cope with; it was no Lilliputian conflict, or sham fight, but a real Brobdignag, of giant form, prepared to browbeat and to crush the gentle Ardent, the most amatory swain of the nineteenth century.

Ladies trembled, their bosoms heaved, and love palpitated about their hearts. Cupid that day was in the court, but stood neuter, remained silent, observed much, and behaved with all the characteristic of the God. But this peroration is too long for the beginning of an important chapter.

The able counsellor Roland, for that was his name, (or as near it as is necessary for the reader to form a judgment of who he actually was, for he is now no more) was, as far as the author has any knowledge, not only a very able, but a very good man.

The most eloquent counsel of the bar on that circuit was selected by Lawyer Rapine, as before remarked, to conduct the prosecution against Ardent. He was a man of so preponderating an influence and eloquence, that the cause of Ardent was given up by his friends as lost, as the weight of the bar was supposed to be against him, so tremendous was his appearance in his gown and wig.

It was said in court and out of court, most confidently, that Ardent had not a leg to stand upon, and he was harassed with apprehension for four long days, and as many nights of disturbed inquietude and want of rest. It was also asserted the weight of metal in the purse was against him, as well as the weight of influence, the ability of the contending disputants, and the cause itself.

Thus in jeopardy stood our hero every day, from the commencement of the trials to their termination, waiting in anxious suspense for the call

of his own name, to defend the action which had been entered upon the lists.

On the fourth day, at a late hour, or about noon, began the conflict between two celebrated gentlemen of the long robe; the opposing one was in name infinitely more known than the gentleman retained by Ardent, to defend his cause.

It is to the circumstance of not remembering the last gentleman's name, now twenty years since the trial took place, that the omission should be attributed, and not to disrespect, for, was the gentleman known to the author, the last would be proud of an opportunity of mentioning him with gratitude: as it is, we must call him, if you please, gentle reader, the unknown champion in black armour, selected to preserve unity, as was usual in the chivalrous ages of the world, when still more serious conflicts were in vogue, in the defence of the immaculate purity of a lady's fair fame, character, reputation, and chastity.

This apparent serio-burlesque tournament for ladies' love, it is expected, from a principle of gallantry to the fair and beautiful sex, that the gentlemen of the long robe will not condemn, for it is to the variety of human characters that masquerades

are indebted for their pleasantry and comic humour ; not that the author has the vanity to suppose he has handled the pen with that ability the subject is capable of, for in comical or burlesque humour it is very difficult to hit the public taste, and still more difficult to secure it. To succeed in the first is attaining great eminence, but to obtain the last, is the highest ambition of the loftiest genius in any age or country. Less might have been said as an apology, more is unnecessary.

It is hoped the ladies will view in a friendly light the desire of the author to please, and not in an unfavourable one ; for all merit is comparative, and so is female beauty. The mind and the heart have each their advocates, but all agree to praise the ladies, or the lovely charms of their own countrywomen.

That the author has selected a woman of the most dubious pretensions to either eulogy or praise is admitted. But that is not his fault,—he would of course have selected one of the most perfect characters as a model of purity and excellence. But the choice was not his : circumstances and events at this era of his life brought him acquainted with the one, and not with the other.

The commencement of this chapter (as is sometimes usual with the author) extends itself with exuberance, and retards the progress of the narrative, for which he offers his humble apology, as well as for all such similar transgressions in tiring the reader's patience, and taking a latitude of excursion into the surrounding world, instead of confining himself to the subject in hand, which the reader will be kind enough to recollect was the trial of the cause of a love quarrel, at the quarter-sessions, at Guildford; and to prevent flying off from the subject again, by any more flights, we will in earnest begin.

The clerk of the court cries the next cause.

“The King *versus* Ardent, in a cause of assault and battery; the plaintiff, Elizabeth Free-love, a widow lady.”

Counsel for Ardent.—“Not guilty, my lord, I am instructed to say.”

Counsellor Roland gets upon his legs, with a smile of good-nature upon his countenance; and when he raised his important eyebrows, like the lion his mane, the whole power of the bar seemed to be raised against Ardent. The court and magistrates all seemed concerned for Ardent, and

Counsellor Roland, to his honour be it spoken, as well as the rest, and this was not more to his own praise than to the bar generally, for they usually acquit themselves like gentlemen, and the antagonist of Ardent, upon this occasion, especially so ; and it is the author's wish he had been now living to receive this humble tribute of his praise ; for, on finding his cause not an honourable one, he gradually yielded the merits to the most deserving : this saved Ardent. But we will now give the speech of the eminent counsellor, as near as can be recollected by the assistance of notes, twenty years afterwards.

Counsel for plaintiff.—“ This cause, my lord (pulling up his gown and adjusting his wig, which got a little on one side of his left ear), is one of such rare occurrence in the annals of civil society, as will demand, my lord, all your attention, and of the gentlemen of the jury also. The lady, my client, is living in affluence, in a beautiful village about the centre of Windsor Forest, that inimitable Arcadia so felicitously sung by the celebrated Mr. Pope, in his Pastorals, as the retreat of shepherds and shepherdesses, the poet, the statesman, the warrior, and the historian, and,

above all, his most gracious Majesty, who, although the last named, is not least entitled to our unbounded respect, gratitude, and esteem. Such is my client, my lord; a lady residing in this far-famed Windsor Forest, so celebrated by poets, historians, and philosophers, and doubtless well known to you, gentlemen of the jury," said the pleasant gentleman, at the same time looking round the whole court with a smile of ironical meaning on his countenance, at least so Ardent thought, for he had his eyes fixed on this opposing counsel and ornament of the English bar; for Ardent sat with his own counsel exactly opposite, and this indulgence of the court was felt by our hero ever afterwards, leaving as it did the bar, where prisoners are tried, vacant. But, to return to our gentleman of the long robe, who continued,—“This lady, of unquestionable pretensions to every virtue and consideration from the opposite sex, has retired some few years to this her estate, from the bustle of the world and the pride of life. This lady, I beg leave of the court to recapitulate (bowing), is in the pride of life, with all the charms that can adorn the most beautiful part of the creation; and, I trust (looking

round), all whom I have the honour to address will believe me, without allowing even the slightest detraction. This lady has the unspeakable misfortune of being deprived of her affectionate partner in life, and is consequently a widow lady, unprotected in her retired country residence. Upon the demise of the beloved object of her affections, she, in the mournful weeds of woe, and almost like a second Niobe, being nearly dissolved in tears, retired to her delightful residence for the purpose of indulging her grief and melancholy. There, mourning unknowing and unknown, she may have been considered as the urn containing the memory of her deceased lord. Her every thought was of him; her tears, her sighs, her sobs, were loud and audible, with every symptom of deep despondency. Her prayers to the Almighty were frequent, in behalf of his soul, and that she might soon partake of the heavenly bliss with her deceased lord, there to be again united, where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest. At this period of her lamentations, the term of which precisely I am not acquainted with, but, as far as we can conjecture, may have been some five or six years, the

lady had not lost the freshness of her beauty, nor had the morning of her days entirely flitted away. Her countenance would sometimes beam forth rays of cheerfulness, even as Aurora gladdens the eastern sky on a fine summer's morning. The portals of her eyes, the lashes of which were the finest that mortals ever beheld, inspired emotion within the breast, especially when they flowed forth in tears like showers in an April day; and her voice was so soft, that it was as the southern breezes wafting the perfumes of Ambrosia. Her breathing was, in her lover's imagination, as the zephyrs fanning the woodbine leaves, and in fragrance resembled the nectar's balmy juice, that the industrious bees oft mistook them for Flora's beauteous rose. Her hands were as lilies of the valley; and, gentlemen of the jury, to finish all her perfections in one word, her bosom was as white as snow, at least in the imagination of that youthful lover, who is now arraigned for assault and battery upon this same beautiful lady of his acquaintance, and for which he now stands to be heard in his defence at your bar. This lady, my client, gentlemen of the jury, is a

candidate for your verdict. The accusation runs thus, as I am instructed in my brief:—

“ A young medical gentleman, who was her professional attendant, had, in the exercise of his vocation, occasionally to sympathize with his fair patient. He attended her in fits, and various other indispositions occasioned by despondency, until he became passionately enamoured of her. To dissipate her grief and relieve the tediousness of her lonely situation, owing to the loss of the best of husbands and fathers, for the lady has one son, this Mr. Ardent, her medical attendant, became suitor for her affections, and attended her duly and truly, until he fancied he had rivetted the lady's affections upon himself; but, finding there was some likelihoods of a rival, they fell out, and he absented himself from her house for three long months. Accident, or the sympathy of nature peculiar to men and women, brought them in contact once again after the long separation, as they were coming from church on a fast-day. They spoke to each other, sympathized with each other's sufferings, and at last her lover, always of an ardent and impetuous character, con-

sidered a cup of tea and a mutual *tête-a-tête* might alleviate the affliction of the mind and the wounds in the hearts of both of them ; for, while separate, much suffering had been endured from acervations in the sensibilities of each individual of the tender couple. In this climax of their afflictions, the young man proposed coming to take his tea with the lady, as he had been accustomed to do, and by way of privacy, not wishing to excite the general observation of the neighbours, he went the back way. The lady, in answer to this proposition of the lover, said, ‘ Not this evening, but to-morrow evening.’ Now there had been a mutual attachment, bordering on the most violent passion, which seems at the least to have actuated the young gentleman, and, in the true spirit of infatuated love, he disregarded the prohibition. It was considered by him as an impediment to the adjustment of differences ; but which was not regarded by the archer, Cupid, who with bended bow shot one of his fatal arrows through one of the panes of glass which divided the lovers ; for she was standing behind the crystal partition, gazing with all that bewitching softness that so readily captivates the male sex, and

lures them as by the attraction of the magnetic needle to the Pole; but in this case these laws were reversed. The lady, timid as a turtle-dove, flew as in coyness from her mate, and, shy as a vestal virgin of unblemished purity, retreated from his caresses, and has instituted this action for so violent a breach of the peace. This is the substance of my charge to you, gentlemen of the jury; and I set myself down in the confidence of my client receiving a very handsome verdict.”

Then, having made his bow to the court, he seated himself.

It then became necessary for the counsel of the defendant to rebut the charge of his learned friend, and substantiate the defence of his client—of not guilty; and, agreeable to the usages of the court, he now rose on his legs, with all due formality, and, bowing to the judge and jury, thus commenced a defence unprecedented in the annals of history, not for its excellence so much as for its singularity.

Counsel for the defence.—“ My lord and gentlemen of the jury, I have the honour to address you upon a very important subject, no less than the defence of, comparatively speaking, an inno-

cent individual accused of high crimes and misdemeanors ; but whose very kindness and intentions of conciliation for propitiating an angry lady have been brought against him. That he was too zealous in the cause he espoused, I admit ; yet the impetus of youth and disappointed ambition, in wishing to stand well with the lady, his former friend, will in part excuse the precipitancy of his manner, which, on the first appearance, I am very well aware, is liable to a misconstruction, and my friend opposite has taken the advantage of that appearance to found upon it an unworthy motive, proceeding or arising from an improper principle. But when I think, my lord and gentlemen of the jury, of the able accusation made by my learned friend, which has been heard by this court with silence and admiration, how can I hope to influence your minds, gentlemen of the jury, with an opposite sentiment to the one which you at present, no doubt, entertain, that the lady claiming your verdict is an injured and abused woman. The very eloquent, luminous, and I may say unprecedented speech which has been this day delivered by my learned friend in this cause, has not been surpassed, and it would be

the height of presumption in me to expect to secure your attention by that commanding strain of impressive declamation which secures the attention and silently makes its way into the hearts of the hearers, which I cannot expect to equal or to influence the court to a contrary belief. I apprehend he has imprinted the merits of his case too firm in your minds ever to be eradicated by me. But the attempt must be made, however difficult the task, or my friend will certainly prevail and triumph over the cause of oppressed and sinking virtue. It is now my business to eradicate these glimmerings of fallacious and deceptive appearances, that mislead the judgment and fix the attention and consideration upon smaller objects rather than upon that bold outline of truth and integrity of principle that will bear the test of scrutiny and the contemplation of the master-springs of human action, and opinions founded in experience, and which we denominate our best reasoning faculties, or those called sound sense and discretion. The party bringing this action for damages is a fair client of my worthy friend, who, to say the least, has availed himself of her personal appearance and attractive manners to influence

your judgment and prejudice the cause of my client; and it is now my serious business and bounden duty to assure you of the solidity of good sense, and I had almost said sound discretion, of the individual whose cause I have the honour of advocating this day. With every deference and respect due to my honourable opponent, I am also proud to acknowledge, by every commendation, his extraordinary merits in this cause, as singular as it is important, and important as it is of consequence that virtue should this day be upheld, and the appearance only made known. It is the advocacy of moral principle I now undertake; it is the prevalence of upright integrity over suspected artifice, and if I can make these two grand principles of human conduct apparent in my client, I am entitled to your verdict. The advocate of the lady assures this assembly (brilliant as some parts of it are with beauty, as in the days of chivalry, when each knight contested for the palm of favour or olive-branch of merit), that the lady whose cause he has the honour to espouse is of unblemished reputation, and possessing a thousand attractions, every one of which may have been as a barbed, if not a poisoned arrow,

shot into my client's too susceptible heart, too sensitive as it was to woman's soft impressions and endearments. If I prove such fact, that the lady by her smiling graces had impressed my young friend with the tenderest sentiments of love previous to his visiting her, in such case, gentlemen, I conceive I am entitled to your verdict. The sensibilities of the heart may require a considerable time to implant or to fix a settled opinion of the good qualities of an individual, but when once achieved, are not suddenly relinquished ; if I prove this to your conviction, in such case I am deserving, on the part of my client, of your favourable construction in this important cause in his favour. At all events, I will risk further demonstration, in the hope that not a single doubt will remain upon your minds before I have finished my argumentative reasoning and unlimited view of the subject ; and if I can but make this affair, which is brought forth with the boldest effrontery and confidence of a verdict and damages, appear in your eyes merely a mock injury, artificially sustained by specious appearances and interested motives (for such is my unshaken opinion, and which I trust to bring home to your minds), this

frivolous charge of assault will then be beneath your entertaining any sentiment upon it but that of contempt, and you will then dismiss the same with costs. I have the confidence to hope, gentlemen of the jury—nay, to expect, I may remove that prejudice against my client which your feelings, as men and as husbands, must necessarily have imbibed against him. It is honourable to your feelings as men to espouse the cause of the weaker sex, but suffer me to give you this salutary caution, that you feel convinced my friend, her counsel, has stated nothing but the truth, and not a fairy tale, to mislead the better feelings of your hearts and sentiments from the proper object so truly deserving your sympathetic feelings. What, if a time should come when his present situation may be yours, or your children's, or your children's children! We all well know the influence which the charm of woman's society has upon our more obdurate sex. But here is a lively instance before you of the tenderest sensibilities, sustained by the most unshaken attachment, as ever came within your jurisdiction to notice and recognise: time only is wanting to relate the facts on which this assertion is founded. But, to be brief, it

was the cause of virtue and honourable feeling he espoused, and he is now brought into this court, where I trust that justice will be awarded him which has been refused by the lady, to whom he has repeatedly appealed for forbearance and a mutual forgiveness of injuries. What am I to say, when I find my learned friend (no doubt instructed in the form of his accusation), has dared to intimate, and that upon bare insinuation merely, that my client is given or disposed to violence, to inflicting injuries, and those offered to a lone, a virtuous, and unprotected lady—a widow, and, as my learned friend is pleased to say, in the prime of life and in the morning of her days. Gracious heaven! what has not the imagination of my honourable friend conjured up before you? I mean not only to assert, by direct accusation, but by inference and intimation, that the man capable of sullyng the real honour of a female, and that dignity and virtue which are the ornaments of the sex, is capable of every other enormity, and deserving of the harsh though severe appellation, of monster. Your judgment, gentlemen of the jury, I beg leave to remind you, should be unbiassed upon this occasion, but your

passions and resentments are doubtless in arms against my client from so inflated and florid a speech, more calculated for the court of Bagdad, and the one thousand and one nights' tales, than for the ears of an English jury in a British court of justice. It partakes more of the flowery tales of fictitious poetry, with its imaginary beings of loves and graces in fabulous history, at war with each other, than of any thing in common association with the ways of men, and really existing, or created from original facts and *bonâ fide* transactions of the passing events in this world, as in the present case, the merits of which you have this day to decide upon, whether guilty or not guilty. I must particularly request, gentlemen of the jury, that you will dismiss or dispossess yourselves of those effusions arising from the heated fancy and warm imagination of my learned opponent, who has taken the lead in this cause with the figures of diction and the creatures of poetry. I acknowledge there is a sympathy placed within the bosom of every man of reflection, to protect a beautiful woman in distress, or any class of womankind suffering unjustly; the sensibilities of the heart and mind have been ap-

pealed to upon this occasion, which are now held by yourselves, as a scale-beam upon an equipoise, whether you should determine for the appeal or against it. It is not your passions, gentlemen of the jury, I appeal to upon this occasion merely—it is to your judgments : in the cooler moments of reflection, you are called upon by your country to decide this cause. I now beg leave, gentlemen of the jury, to call your attention to an important feature in this cause, which should be strongly impressed upon your recollection,—that upon your decision this day will, perhaps, depend the overwhelming with shame and misery one of the most useful class of the present age, a promising youthful character ; for by attacking vice we establish virtue. The inferences to be drawn from the whole of my honourable friend's arguments, are nothing less than that my client must be condemned to captivity in the dungeons of disgrace, or to fines unspeakable, and for what ? The tale you have heard, gentlemen, is a garbled representation of facts ; it is but the figures of speech :—the deep desponding woe of affliction, of unconsolable sorrow for the loss of a dear departed friend—nay, a husband, are to be looked

upon but as so many excitements to secure your sympathetic affections in the lady's interest, as well as your verdict. My friend would find it a difficult task to prove the lady is a widow, for thereby hangs a mystery, and that she has all the virtues that adorn the most beautiful of the sex ; but it is not for me, gentlemen, to call in question all these virtues, that so eminently adorn the most beautiful of the sex, but to state that considerable stress has been attached to those fascinating principles which I hope, for the honour of the sex, are not singular, and it will be presumed that the most prepossessing women throughout life will always be found the most virtuous. That my friend's client is lovely and prepossessing I will not deny. These attractions, so difficult at all times to be resisted by the wisest of mankind, is an argument in favour of my client, instead of proving one against him. He is a young man with all his passions thick about him, which are sometimes difficult to be restrained, as the courser, when on his native plains, snuffs the breeze, seeks his favourite female afar off, leaps the fence, and gets himself into an inclosure. Nature in each instance is to share a part of the responsibility ;

our passions are implanted within us for the wisest of purposes by the Almighty ; that they should be kept within the control of judgment and reason is admitted by all civilized nations, and, as man is an integral part thereof, it is expected he should conform to the established usages ; but who has not, at some time or other of his life, felt their ungovernable influence, so difficult to be restrained at all times by the dictates of sober sense. The most remarkable feature and characteristic circumstance of this action is, that the female, who enticed him to her arms in the first instance, is the first to institute proceedings against him for damages, and, perhaps, imprisonment, for the indemnification of hers and his own long-protracted expenses of litigation. The real damage sustained is a pane of glass, broken for the purpose of conversation, the lady having complained to her former lover of her deep despondency, which she expected would be fatal to her, and bid him adieu, saying it was for the last time, as they should never meet again ; and her former lover, naturally conceiving such gloom to arise from solitude, offered his services to dissipate *ennui*, and, for that purpose,

said he would come and take his tea with her that very evening. The lady in reply said, not this evening, but to-morrow evening; but my client, presuming upon the benevolence of womankind in general, waited upon her that evening; this the lady not approving of, instituted an action with the view to obtain damages, and, if possible, drive this young man from her neighbourhood. All this evidently sprang from vindictiveness, the consequence of obtruding himself some few hours earlier than had been assigned by the lady herself, and which now subjects Ardent, her former lover, to your verdict. The lady, as my brief instructs me to say, to prove the coolness which subsisted between herself and her old flame, charged him as being a sailor, thus making it doubtful, by her own testimony, who the real person was that broke the pane of glass. But my client, with the upright principles and feelings of a gentleman, which do him honour, has no wish or intention to conceal the fact that it was himself who did the mighty deed, the source of the present action. He had been teased and tantalized by the lady herself through the glass-door, looking on the lawn and flower-garden at

the back part of the house ; and, thinking her in a playful mood and rather gayer in her looks than when she complained of despondency but an hour before, he took up a pebble from the gravel walk, showed it to her, and, in a playful manner, said, ‘ You see what will be the consequence of your not surrendering at discretion.’ Now, all this foolery, for it can be called by no other name, may be excused in a lover, although, perhaps, in no one else, and then only extenuated by the ardour of his passion, which, it may be supposed, at that critical moment, was not entirely extinct, although no doubt he has since had reason to wish it had been. The weapon of assault so dreaded by the fair lady in question, was no other than a pebble stone of the size of a hazel-nut, made use of, no doubt, for the purpose of making the communication the more easy, while the lady kept him in suspense as to whether she would or would not open the door. The door was eventually opened by the defendant by removing a middle bolt, and if she really did not wish him to enter, why not have fastened all three bolts, instead of the only one within reach ? There looks like some design in this, which I will thank

you, gentlemen of the jury, to bear in recollection, for it appears suspicious, and very like a premeditated contrivance to ensnare my client and induce him to commit an indiscretion on finding the only obstacle to be one bolt, and that, perhaps, scarcely in the socket. The pane of glass being broken, away ran the lady to her opposite neighbour, saying, a sailor man had broken into her house, and she was apprehensive of very bad consequences to herself, had she remained. My client, it seems, finding the lady was gone out of the house by the front door, retired in about ten minutes after, lamenting the fickleness of woman. The lady, the same evening, as if to obtain his admission of the fact, sent the constable to inquire what Mr. Ardent meant, while herself stood outside of the house during the inquiry, waiting for his answer. He had too much principle either to evade or deny the fact; it was then, after that admission, that every inconvenience followed, which would be tedious to relate in this place, and trespassing on the time of this court. I have only a few general observations to make, and will then conclude. There had been some previous misunderstanding, which prevented the gentleman visiting the lady

for full three months before. To lovers, gentlemen of the jury, three months is a very long period of absence—indeed, tantamount to years with men of cooler reflection; and poets themselves have considered three weeks—nay, three days, according to Mr. Ovid, insupportable when deprived of seeing their mistresses, who are renowned in story for beauty and loveliness. That there are such characters even in the present day, I think cannot be doubted; and Mr. Ardent, my client, I am willing to confess, is of that intemperate class as not to brook slight obstacles in obtaining a lady's favour. The most fiery and impetuous passions in man, let it be remarked, are often indications of latent genius within, was it properly brought forth; but when not exercised in their proper course or pursuit, remain smothered by their own impulses and impetuosities, not deigning to look back or on either side, but rushing onward, and frequently leaping out of the course prescribed by nature and law. Their imaginations are in general too exuberant, and exceed the judgment of sober sense and discretion, which travels slower and with measured steps. The prevailing doctrine of

the passions is, that reason has not a sufficient control over them. Gentlemen of the jury, I crave the indulgence of your patience yet a little while longer, to state that the lady is much the senior of my client in point of age, at least thirteen years; which difference implies, if it infers nothing more, that her knowledge of the world must be the most considerable of the two, and that, unless she had given him very extraordinary encouragement, it is scarcely to be credited such a very strong attachment should have subsisted. It is possible the lady in the first instance was pleased with a youthful lover, and that after a time some difference may have arisen, which is no uncommon thing; for very few have reduced the passion of love to a complete science—we are not all of us Ovids—all is not congruity, amity, and peace-offerings to the idol of the affections—no, a little intervening discord will occasionally arise, as frequently it does, in the best-toned instruments—flats and sharps in music are necessary parts of harmony, and therefore are, upon some occasions, necessary parts in the construction of our nature—for what is more displeasing than monotony? The smiling summer's

most beautiful flowers are refreshed by the breezes that blow ; so, in like manner, are the affections fanned by little intervening disagreements. Another remark I have to produce in favour of my client, and which I now offer to your notice : it is this—the lady was unhappy, and required counsel and consolation ; the young Esculapius went purposely to yield these necessary parts of happiness, which tend, when judiciously administered, so materially and essentially to the alleviation of the miseries of human life. This action, I beg leave further to observe, implies a vindictiveness of disposition most unusual, as if seeking for an annihilation of the victim, rather than being the effect of moderate anger. A suitable atonement for the trifling offence would have been a very moderate apology. Indeed, to have acknowledged the offence would have been sufficient with most minds, and would have been ample compensation for injury sustained—the chief of which, as far as I can comprehend, originated in a mere affected fright, on the lady's part, that her former lover was metamorphosed into a sailor man, with the intention to do her some bodily harm. All fathers of families, possessing honest minds, and all other men who

are influenced by good motives, will see the propriety of dismissing this frivolous and vexatious action. It appears extraordinary how such a suit could have been instituted for the express purpose of damages, when the whole affair partakes more of folly and youthful excess than of malice and ill will aforethought. The assault, if it can be considered such, was not committed in the dusk of the evening, or in the darkness of night, but at five o'clock in the afternoon of a summer's day. It conveys this impression to my mind, that there was more malice intended on the part of the lady, than any real personal injury sustained, or even intended to be committed; and it may be considered merely as an assumed fright of the lady's, a mere pretended apprehension of evil; and if you, gentlemen of the jury, should be of the same opinion, I request the favour of your verdict, in releasing my client from that onus and reproach which has been endeavoured to be thrown upon his character and principles, and, as such, I now with confidence hope for an acquittal." And, so saying, the defendant's counsel, after bowing to the jury, sat down by the side of his client and his attorney, waiting for the judge's charge to the jury, previous to the decision of the court.

Judge's charge to the jury.

“ Gentlemen of the jury,—In summing up the evidence, as offered by the plaintiff's counsel, I have to bring to your recollection that the lady is a widow lady; consequently, defenceless—that the plaintiff is not to be exposed to affronts in her own house. The law of this land pays no respect to persons or things; it is justice and justice only that our king and constitution require at our hands, both as men and as administrators in his name. The law is not made to be put aside upon every pretence of folly and inconsideration. There can be no doubt but that to break into any person's house, whether the individual is poor or rich, is the same thing in the eye of the law; every man's house is his castle, whether it be a palace or a cottage. The entering violently therein is an offence against the established law of this land, which was framed by the united wisdom of the nation, and has been the ruling standard of right for some hundreds of years: therefore, he that offends against law is cognizable to that law. It remains for you, gentlemen of the jury, to determine the real merits of the case before you; you have heard the statement made by the plaintiff's counsel, as well as the able defence made by the

counsel for the defendant. For the defence it has been stated, that the intention was to give counsel, as had been previously agreed upon, the necessity of which arose out of some former misunderstandings ; that the plaintiff, not approving of the time as proposed by the defendant, had appointed the afternoon of the morrow for the meeting to adjust such differences of opinion as then existed. In consequence of this rejection of the overture to an explanation on that day, the defendant, not mindful of the respect due to an unprotected woman in particular, forcibly entered her house, by the breaking of a pane of glass, removing the bolt of the door, and entering therein: farther offence the indictment does not speak of, which is conclusive that there was no malice aforethought, or injury intended either to person or property. It now rests with yourselves, gentlemen of the jury, how far you are inclined to condemn or acquit the prisoner at your bar. If there should be any difficulty springing up in the minds of either of you, gentlemen, as to the particular incidents influencing the nature of your verdict, I shall feel myself happy to give you my best opinion, when called upon for that purpose."

The judge then sat down.

The jury turned round in the jury box, and in five minutes pronounced that they acquitted the prisoner of all intention to injure the lady, and also of breaking into the house, from the motives actuating him so to do being commendable, although the means were reprehensible, and the foreman of the jury concluded—"We all unanimously acquit Robert Ardent of all intention to harm the said Elizabeth Freelove." Ardent, rising from his seat, respectfully thanked the jury for their acquittal; and the judge then addressed the prisoner—"Mr. Ardent, you have the happiness of being honourably acquitted by a jury of your country, which jury is a standing proof of the wisdom of our laws and happy constitution. I recommend it to your serious consideration, not to be led away a second time by the impulse of infatuation, lest you meet with a different verdict. Acquit the prisoner upon paying his fees."

Clerk. "O, yes! O, yes! O, yes! this is to give notice, I now proclaim to you, and all of you, that in this court of oyer and terminer, belonging to our sovereign liege lord the king, the prisoner Ardent is acquitted of intention to harm the said Freelove, and this is the determination

of the court this day, the year of our Lord——.
The prisoner is discharged upon paying his fees.”

Thus ended this famous trial; after which the lawyer for the plaintiff and the lawyer for the defendant, with the defendant and his friends, partook of a social dinner together at the inn, and forgot old animosities in drinking toasts popular upon such occasions; likewise, a song supposed to have been written by the village poet, expressly for the occasion, was sung with great applause, and if it is now inserted, may, perhaps, pass without any great severity of criticism. It is entitled—

THE CHIVALROUS KNIGHT.

All hail to the knight of the petticoat light,
The reformer of Cyprian dames;
Who boldly would tilt with the sins of a jilt,
And compel her to quench her loose flames.

Long life to the man who conceived the vast plan
Of making foul harlots pure maids;
May his fame never die, but his name soar on high,
When his body is gone to the shades.

This chivalrous don would venture upon
An exploit so valiant and bright;
He toil'd and he rubb'd, and he manfully scrubb'd,
To wash a she'blackamoor white.

But all he could do would not alter the hue
Of this damsel so dingy and dark ;
While black dolly in turn at his labours did spurn,
And punished her meddling spark.

She summoned a crew of her own dingy hue,
This man to reward for his labour ;
Both clergy and law she together did draw,
And bid them the knight well belabour.

O, woman uncivil ! you'll go to the devil,
For maltreating morality's knight,
Who advised you each day to scourge, fast, and pray,
And attend to his lectures each night.

Incontinent dame, to keep thee from shame,
That thou mightest all vestals surpass,
He counsell'd thee well, lest thy flesh should rebel,
To turn all thy lovers to grass.

But his labours, he found, were lost on bad ground,
And he often would think in deep mood ;
He was troubled and posed, like the man who proposed
To turn excre——t back into food.

It was thus, in song and merrymaking, the party gave vent to their joy at escaping from the painful anxiety of the long-protracted litigation ; and a formidable business it had been to all parties. To say the truth, the lawyer for the plaintiff was a *bon-vivant*, and liked to enjoy himself as well as most men ; and, finding there was a

dinner ordered at the inn by the successful party, he sent his compliments to lawyer Ardent, and requested to be one of them upon their festive merrymaking on so joyful an occasion. Indeed, he enjoyed himself as much as any of them, for, finding the cause was against him, he made his overtures to the opposite party to participate in their joviality, which was permitted, as it was expected he would be able to influence the lady to drop the more serious prosecution in the ecclesiastical court; but in this Ardent and his brother, the lawyer, were wofully disappointed.

CHAPTER X.

ARDENT returned from the joyful overthrow of his opponent, or rather, sorrowful one, in some respects, for he could not gain his cause without the unhappy woman being made more miserable than ever—and, as he feared, so it happened. She became ten times more furious and vindictive : so far from defeat proving a salutary lesson to her, it acted in the inverse ratio, and produced exasperation—she was like a mad woman ; indeed, it has been thought, by those inclined to the mildest construction, that she was deranged in her mind, which warped her principles, and rendered her so very indignant at either reason or counsel.

Before Ardent reached the village, he rode his horse round to the Reverend Mr. Aimwell, to inform him of his success, and the vanquishment of the lady whose charms had heretofore been potent in influence ; but she had since tried the experiment of gold itself, which she expected was irresistible. Divine Providence now began to

change the prospect of her affairs, and suffered her to be defeated upon this occasion, and would, in all probability, in every subsequent one, had our hero but continued on the law-suits ; but the fact was, while she had apparently thousands at command, it was a very unequal contest. But this is anticipating events ; and all that remained for our hero to accomplish was, like the fox in *Æsop's* fable, who, being deprived by the eagle of one of its cubs, applied that firebrand to the tree that produced the restitution of its injured feelings.

The arrival of Mrs. Freelove's servant announced the important event to the villagers, who collected round him like a swarm of bees. It was the last day of the sessions—the defeat of one of the parties that day was certain. With open mouths they began their inquiries, stopping his horse, or, what is equally probable, the servant pulled up to communicate the event ; for he himself was like an angry turkey cock, and about as red in the face with hard riding.

The first villager stopped him with the question of—“ Well, Will, how goes on the cause ? which has got the day ?—I warr'nt me your missus has,

and you are come in such haste to tell her the news."

"Ay," said the second villager; "your horse sweats, Will—you must have rode deuced hard—very hard, indeed; and, by the looks of yourself and the nag, no postboy could have made more expedition."

As soon as the man-servant could obtain breath and wipe his face, for he was in a perspiration as well as the horse, he exclaimed, "My missus is sold, sold, sold; her lawyer sold her to the counsellor with three pigs' tails to his wig; he got upon his legs, looked very fierce, but, instead of arguing for missus, he argued against her—fairly spoke against her, as if he had been paid for it, and so all the people said who heard him. The lawyer sold her to the counsellor, that's all, and my missus will have to pay all the expenses. I don't think the lawyers care how a cause goes, so as they get paid,—that is my opinion. I left all the parties at dinner together, like a set of thieves as they are."

"A bad job, Will," observed a third villager, "a bad job—who would have thought it? Dang it, what a swinging bill she will have to pay!"

“ Why, mayhap so be,” remarked a fourth clown : “ the lawyers are eating the oysters, and sent you forwards, Will, with the shells.”

The man-servant then, in a very angry tone, replied, “ Mayhap they may come by-and-by ; I only bring bad news with me, but I cannot stay,” and, so saying, he flogged his horse and rode on to his mistress, who, on hearing the news, was almost raving mad.

After his departure, one of the villagers shook his head, and, with an assumed look of sagacity, thus addressed the assembled throng : “ These lawyers be a set of people peculiar to themselves ; though I say it, they set people together by the ears, and, while they are fighting one against the other, do you see ! they take the money out of their pockets, and then laugh at them for drinking small beer while they drink the strong, and, not contented with that, but a good dinner and wine besides, do you see ?” After this speech, and a considerable number more comments, wise sayings, and observations, upon the honesty of lawyers in general and their fools of clients, each passed on to his own home, to spread the news.

CHAPTER XI.

MRS. FREELOVE was very angry, as might be expected, at the news of losing her cause. She had not sense enough or was too vindictive to perceive the ridiculous, not to say despicable, light in which her conduct was viewed ; indeed, she would have been herself at the sessions, but from the dissuasions of her attorney, who saw the likelihoods of her being persuaded, by the counsel employed, to drop the proceedings. And sufficient reasons he had to keep his client from more liberal-minded men, lest they might expose his conduct as not being the most just or honourable—at all events, she was not there either day, but her proxy and deputy the attorney attended day after day, and also her man-servant was sent to bring the earliest intelligence to his mistress, and relate to her the true posture of affairs ; which he faithfully performed, denouncing the whole party, who had sat down to dinner together as if nothing had occurred. Such has often been

known to take place between the soldiers of each army after a battle, they having had enough of fighting for kingdoms.

Mrs. Freelove had been tortured by suspense equal to Ardent himself, for she was occasionally very sanguine in her expectations, at other times dubious of the event. In the very climax of repeated disappointment the news reached her. She was ready to sink on the ground, and requested to be left alone, and, when alone, entered upon the following review of the whole business, not absolutely as a perfectly sane woman would have done, but as a woman of her temper would be supposed to do who had met with a disappointment. She now went into the extremes of anger, bordering on ridiculous sublimity, or that peculiar state of excited feeling, having folly for its baser motive, and an agony not easily described as a consequence of failure.

“Ardent to escape me again!” said she, in a paroxysm of rage; “disappointment upon disappointment! ruin seems fast advancing upon me! I have acted contrary to all wholesome advice, and, in fact, contrary to that of all my well-wishers, and, what is the most provoking of

all, fulfilling the prophesy of Ardent, who frequently told me, unless I respected my character, I could not be respected. I could rave and sing for madness!" was among the first effusions of her agitated mind; then, again, she would say, "The world will laugh me to scorn, and I shall be either looked upon with pity, contempt, or both. I am mad, foolish, and vicious by turns; but all of these may be comprised in three words—an angry woman. I wish I could relent, that I could reform; but then it would please Ardent, and I have vowed to be revenged on him. The white sheet and candle give me infinite pleasure to think of—to see virtue degraded by vice, and by the pillars of morality, too; it will be charming, excellent sport, to make the reverends the tools of his overthrow. Many a more powerful man they have humbled ere now, and in a cause of far greater importance: for instance—King John, when he gave away the crown of England; King Henry II. when he submitted to the penance of scourging until his back ran down with blood, at Becket's tomb. Those were charming times for king and people, it must be confessed, and the present, with few exceptions, are equally conducive to my

revenge; to involve their champion knight, or the moral champion of England, in disgrace,—it will be exquisite, it will be a treat worthy the remembrance of all after ages. The man who would save me, whether I will or no—oh! it will be delightful to degrade and bring him into contempt: for mischief is my aim, and mischief is my delight—I glory in my malevolence against superior virtue. I will bend him or break him, or, sad alternative, he shall break, or, which is the same thing, ruin me—for to see him thus triumphant is past all enduring. He, as a ship, still surmounts the waves of fortune and the tempestuous hurricanes of disordered passions: I will humble him yet, or my name is not Freelove. Lawyer Rapine, you are still my best of friends, do you but ruin Ardent; for that proud young man, with all his seeming humility, has a strength of mind equalled by few: he dives below the surface of things, and will not take appearances as he finds them, but will attempt to reform and reclaim those that are irreclaimable,—in fact, revolutionize immorality and licentiousness. He surmounts difficulties that would be the ruin of any other individual. Such is his integrity, that what

he says is relied on as truth itself; while all I assert is disbelieved, or given credence to by a few only, and those of doubtful pretensions to credit or respectability. I may now sing some foolish songs of my own composing, to divert my melancholy and despondency; I know I am sometimes nearly insane, and have written them in my lucid intervals. Ardent reasons by the rule of right principle, but who follows right?—None; no, not one; so said the Saviour of the world, and the world is the same to this day, although it is near two thousand years since the birth, parentage, and education of that great and good being. Ardent aims at the singularity of perfecting the imperfect, which will eventually destroy him; sooner or later he will be overthrown by his own generous impulses of the heart and mind. But I have a pride and an independence of mind equal to his own; ha! ha! ha! ha! to think that Ardent should endeavour to prevent it—it is like the knight-errantry of former days, when the Don battled with the windmills;—in the brain of Cervantes, it is true, for not on earth did such rencontres exist, but only in the creative fancies of his own imaginary conceptions; who wished

to ridicule, by ideal blows, the champions of knighthood, and those zealous enthusiasts in ladies' love, in tilt and tournament. To rescue the world from such madness, he invented his fable of the Quixote, which Ardent believes to be a real history, and endeavours to imitate. Now, then, for a mournful ditty.—Ha, ha, ha! to think that Ardent should believe that I am in my senses, when I know that I have lost them, past his recall or any other person's. To be thus deprived of my revenge, is the unhappy re-action of an ill-spent life, as the Reverend Dr. Allworthy would have said, had he been now in the village, and that I was deservedly punished. Did Ardent know all, he would think I was mad in earnest, but he now only suspects me to be occasionally deranged. Ha, ha, ha! I laugh for company, and now I will sing for company one of those foolish songs that have served to divert me in many a melancholy hour ; for, since I have fallen out with Ardent, I am doubly miserable, for I love him and hate him by turns most immoderately."

It is here become necessary to make some

apology to the reader for the insertion of such an effusion as the following :—

“ In happy valley now I move,
And seek to find repose ;
Then on the heath I pensive rove,
And there my griefs disclose.

Upon the hills I mourn with grief,
Lament the time that's past ;
I strive each hour to find relief,
My heart is broke at last.

Soon I shall find what I now seek,
A pillow for my head ;
Then Ardent will lament with grief
And sorrow, when I'm dead.

“ Begone, songs, and all thoughts of time past, present, and future ; time now and time then have different meanings : Ardent was then my friend, and I his.”

Such was the state of Mrs. Freelove's mind, imperfectly describēd, it is true ; but such were the emblems of that mind, gradually giving way beneath the trials of a reverse of fortune. The inconveniences attending misplaced affections have always been the theme of poets, lovers,

and historians ; the records are numerous, but not always overcharged ; the fluctuations of the heart and mind are so various as not even at this day to be exhausted. But severe are the after-consequences that will finish the bathos of this history, presenting an awful description of the inconveniences attending an abandonment of principle and following a licentiousness of manners.

CHAPTER XII.

ARDENT had no great cause for triumph, or to rejoice long at his success : Lawyer Rapine, true to his name and the ill blood that flowed in his veins, was resolved to make up for this defeat by a suitable attention to his next cause, pending in the ecclesiastical court of Doctors' Commons ; and, as he was himself the only witness of the delinquency of our hero, he was the more certain of inconveniencing him, not depending upon contingencies, but absolute proof positive, by his own information, attestation, or, as it is termed in law, his affidavit.

But not to digress for the sake of digression, or for the purpose of prolonging this history to an immeasurable length, which has, perhaps, began to weary the reader with its disclosures and disastrous inconveniences, for by such have the mighty fallen, and to such may be attributed the eventual overthrow of our two principal cha-

racters, although by very opposite means and through very opposite principles.

Ardent was alone in his study one morning, when a large parcel or packet of law writing arrived by coach at his house. He was so bewildered as not competently to be able to form an idea of the mischief that was intended him, and, therefore, merely glanced at its contents, depending upon a more favourable opportunity for their explanation; and at that critical period arrived, by the same coach, the Lawyer Ardent, or brother of our hero, who now made his appearance, as if by magical influence, at the very precise moment when his services were most in requisition.

The first inquiry, after the ordinary greetings of brotherly affections were passed, was, what news—any thing fresh stirring this morning?

“You are the very person I wanted to see,” said our hero: “here is a large packet of law writing that I do not fully understand; but something relating to spinster, penance, and Free-love.”

The brother impatiently said, “I called upon you expecting something fresh had occurred; you

are never out of trouble,—hot water is your element, you deserve to be scalded.”

To which Ardent remarked, “It must be confessed it is now no longer the days of roses and posies, love and wine, invitations to parties, summonses to fits, sobs and hysterics;—the case is quite altered. If ever I attempt to reform a lady of pleasure again, may I be hanged for a fool or a madman. This is the packet, John; look it over and see what you can make of it; for to me it is past finding out, distracted as I am by various perplexities.”

Lawyer Ardent, in a hasty pet, snatched the papers of law writing from his brother, saying: “You are, for a certainty, the strangest man under the heavens; what business have you to set about reforming the world? will you never keep your head out of a halter? You must be meddling, you must be the marplot in every thing which concerns not yourself. In trying to extinguish the flames in another’s house, you have set fire to your own. If you see anything wrong or going wrong, you must thrust your nose into it; let it be with friend or foe, have at it you will, if it ruins yourself: you will be so bit some day, as will give you a sickening of fishing in

troubled waters. Let me see what it is all about," he continued, opening the packet and reading it; "why, you have got up to your chin, and the devil may help you out, for I cannot. Why, you are cited before the Ecclesiastical Court of Doctors' Commons, for calling this woman a wh—e."

At this mentioning of the unfortunate consequences attending a hasty word, our hero burst out into an immoderate fit of laughter, which, the brother observing, made this remark. "Let me tell you, it is a very serious affair, and will make you laugh the wrong side of your mouth, or I am much mistaken."

Ardent could not refrain from laughing, notwithstanding his brother's serious observations, and the more serious the lawyer was, the more perceptible was the ridicule attached to the whole affair; although our hero was ready to hang himself for his folly, in having placed himself in the power of one of those black-legged lawyers called a pettyfogging attorney, who will undertake any improper cause for gain.

Lawyer Ardent again continued his observations and reflections:—"To say the least of it, it is a very cruel piece of business; barbarous work—

this is your angel—a black one, I think, you can have no doubt of; I think we may say she has taken off the mask, or will do so very shortly.”

“Upon my word, John,” said our hero, endeavouring to look grave, “I am serious, and yet I cannot refrain from being highly amused at the ridiculous folly of the whole affair: parsons and lawyers, doctors and wh—es, a very pretty jumble, or assortment, as I ever heard of or witnessed; and your arriving at the critical moment when the whole affair wanted elucidating—it is certainly the prelude to a burlesque tragedy; and you clear up the mystery so plainly as makes her appear to be a complete dark angel, as you familiarly call her, although I think you said she was perfectly black.”

“As black as the devil incarnate,” replied the lawyer, “and you will find her so before she has done with you.”

“It will be more difficult for her to prove that she is virtuous, John, than for others to prove that she is vicious.”

“A fine dark angel she is, truly,” said the lawyer, “as ever was vomited from the depths of hell; out of the frying-pan into the fire, you

will have to stand in the church with a white sheet, that is all, with the exception of holding a lighted candle in your hand, and recanting the vices you have laid to her charge ; always aiming at what you call right, and eternally getting into wrong!"

" Explain the nature of this process, my dear brother," said our hero, who now began to think the affair very disagreeable.

" In the first place, then, it is a very expensive affair," said the young lawyer, " and your father will not support you in the suit against her ; for he says you deserve to be punished, and, as he has a large family, he will take care of them, and you must fight your own battles. If you will be a Quixote and run your head against windmills, you must meet with the blows you had reason to expect ; nothing will convince you but actual experience, and for which you will pay very dear, either in person or pocket, or both. Such is the law of the land, however imperfect it may be."

" What ! the law of the land, John, not uphold truth ? Then I suspect there is some defect in its construction, and I am resolved to find it out. What ! the church patronize whoredom and

wh—es? You surely cannot be sincere, and must be speaking in jest.”

“ I do not say they do directly, Robert, but indirectly it appears so, I must confess, as far as my judgment extends.”

“ If I had told a lie, I should deserve to have been punished, but, as it is, I will not recant for any man or for any law in the land. Good God! stand in a white sheet for speaking the truth, and hold a tallow-candle in my hand, lighted, too, as I suppose, to read my recantation by at noon-day,—that is, to convert truth into falsehood. Pretty laws we have, and these, too, religious laws — more likely framed by devils. Pray, what would the clergy have doomed me to, had I told a lie? I suppose, then I should have met with applause. You may present my compliments to the authors of this incantation, and say I would scatter their brains out first, if they have any, and mine afterwards, rather than submit to disgrace the understanding of a man, if I have any left, or they either. Our laws are extremely imperfect, notwithstanding the boasted liberty of the subject. I suspect this law is connived at by the rich, to protect their mistresses or concu-

bines, and the clergy give countenance to the same; for when they become exalted to the mitre, it is no impossible circumstance to suppose they themselves may require mistresses as well as wives."

The lawyer shook his head: "Your resentment," said he, "is the very thing she wishes to bring you to; you have ruined her prospects in life, and the sooner she leaves this world the better; and, if she can through madness or despair induce you to be the executioner of her yourself, and those who inflict this penance, it would be the very thing she is aiming at, and would then have obtained the utmost bounds of her wish. Has she not said, all along, she would spend her last guinea to ruin you? Is she not doing it? Is she not exerting the utmost malice or revenge of her black heart to accomplish the same? and the clergy, who, like Jesuits, must be meddling, think it proper to visit the sins of the church upon your back instead of their own."

"Morality is very suitable, then, to be preached, you think, but not to be practised by the higher and graver dignitaries of church and state; and this law is retained to protect the vices of great

men — by attacking their mistresses they are attacked in their strong holds, and this is your opinion?"

"Most decidedly: beauty does not always accompany wealth; therefore, wives are married for the convenience of the estate, and the mistress is retained for the creature comfort, not for the purpose of being reflected upon."

"A very pretty compound of law and convenience as ever I heard of. So, so, gentlemen senators, this is your doctrine, and, graybeards, yours; for doubtless ye have felt and still feel the power of woman's charms over your susceptible hearts and tenderest of sensibilities. So, I am to become the laugh and the jeer, that the vices of the great may be upheld. I tell you what, my dear brother, I am of the opinion that he who improves the wisdom of the present race of men, is deserving, at the least, of the thanks of his countrymen; so it shall be my business henceforth to detect the impolicy of what are now thought wise men, and convince the world they are more or less fools, or rather crafty knaves, of which latter title no man seems to be ashamed. This surely must be laudable—what!

my honour, my word, my professional character, all to be sacrificed for speaking the truth? what compensation can church and state make me after this? They outrage common honesty upon an innocent man. If this law is at variance with common honesty, let it be repealed: it is at variance with the old adage, ‘Speak truth and shame the devil.’ Does that court mean to profess regulations contrary to wisdom and the dictates of humanity,—in fact, contrary to the rules and precepts of the Saviour and of the Ten Commandments? It is scandalous—it is, as you say, barbarous: it was invented by the Catholic priesthood to protect their own gross immorality, and continued by the clergy of the present day, who, by punishing the innocent for high crimes and misdemeanors, do, in fact, protect the guilty great. It is a relic of ancient barbarism, as much so as the law of the Druids, when in existence, who destroyed men as sacrifices, under the pretence that it was acceptable to their gods, Thor and Woden; and what do the present clergy do but sacrifice me for speaking the truth?—What! only one man dare to speak the truth in the nineteenth century? I

will be that man, and dare the priesthood to do its worst. Are the decrees of this matchless prelacy more solemn than the decrees of heaven? its fulminations more malignant than those of hell, or of equal import with the dark ages of the inquisition? The time will come when the Ardent of Windsor Forest, like a lion from the wilderness, will make known his griefs; his talents shall be as talons, and his satire fangs, that will tear their mock sanctity in pieces and render them the scoff of thousands; not the more respectable principles they imbibe and disseminate, but this abominable remnant of papal Rome. So, then, having sustained the claw of the lion, or civil prosecution, with firmness, I am now to undergo ecclesiastical tyranny, or the paw of the bear, both dreaded beasts in this hitherto supposed harmless forest. This mockery, this jest, this burlesque representation of a mock tragedy, is to be performed by me as the principal hero, but I will never endure it;—what, for speaking truth?—this infliction of tortuous punishment for speaking the truth only? Jesus Christ was punished for speaking truth: he said, ‘I came from the Father, who sent me,’ meaning the heavenly parent of us all; for truth

is derived from Heaven, as much so as falsehood is from hell, or the wicked devices of man. Addison, Steele, Johnson, Hawkesbury, all wrote on morals, and inculcated truth in many an airy fiction; for the world is too bad to be corrected by truth naked and unadorned. "She disgusts the nice sensibility of the great, and the clergy will excuse none who unveil the mysteries of their sanctuary, where concubines repose under the sanction of the mitre, and the sacerdotal robes of the priesthood cover alike the morals of the clergy with the immorality of ladies of easy virtue."

The young lawyer, who had patiently awaited his brother's tirade, now said, "Taunt and jest, if you please, for they deserve it upon such an occasion; they certainly appear to be, in this instance, the patrons of concubinage and mistress-keeping in this country, and as such deserve the lash of satire and the comments of those disposed to be merry at their expense; for in proportion to human folly is the lampoon or sarcasm always ready to assist violated decency and common sense."

"If I am to become as another Regulus," said the irritated Ardent, "preferring the benefit of

his country to his own inconvenience, it must be so, and I must submit to this great injustice ; but is it proper that an innocent individual should be in danger of proscription if he braves the censure of the church and refuses to make himself either ridiculous or contemptible in the eyes of the public, which, to a respectable medical character, is worse than death itself. What is it but ostracism ? and, like another Aristides, I must either consent to debase myself, and thus sign my own condemnation, although an innocent man, or suffer unjustly. Let the worthy part of the hierarchy, for doubtless there are some respectable characters among them who have feelings common with human kind, acknowledge the influence of reason and reflection. The simplicity of truth should be respected, let it appear whenever it may, and however uncourtly may be its character. Vice and virtue are surely deserving of contrary recompense : the one of laudable commendation, and the former of lenity due to humanity."

" All you have said, my fiery brother, I grant you, has considerable weight, but is not equal to the character of a woman ; a good name to a woman is inestimable, it is beyond all price."

“Then let her first be the good woman,” retorted our hero, “and not one that lures to destruction. An abandoned woman has no right to the protection of more than civil law, and then only on the principles of humanity. This intended infliction of punishment is not human; it is savage, and dictated by savages, who do not discriminate between the innocent and the guilty. You will not dare to maintain that an abandoned woman requires the same protection as a virtuous one, while their views upon society are so widely different. Are the days of Solomon to be revived in this country? and, if so, why not remove the law of bigamy? The reason is plain: the poor only are restrained, who cannot maintain two wives—such is the inconsistency—while the rich have the liberty of unrestrained concubinage. This law is a trick placed upon their wives by the rich, under the pretence of protecting them, when, in fact, it is covert to mistress-keeping among the great; and under this license granted them by the church, they may have as many mistresses as they please, without being reflected upon. Such are our blessed laws; but so corrupt a system cannot stand,—it shall not stand, if the pen of satire

can lash its vices sufficiently, and remove from the public mind those films of ignorance which obscure the eyesight of the blind, and those that will not see this monster of deformity hiding itself under the aprons of the clerical priesthood.

“All that you say, Robert, carries with it weight, and were you to stand the issue of a contest with her, in all likelihoods you would prevail against her, as you did at the late trial, and come off honourably acquitted, from the circumstance of your being a young man, unhackneyed in the ways of vice, and all your attempts have been to prevent others falling into the same snares, distresses, and inconveniences, that you have undergone, and I fear are likely to undergo.”

“I would spend my last shilling, John, and pledge my honour, to pay all the costs of suit, to prevent such a disgrace, for was it to take place, I could never hold up my head again. It would make me hate my country, my existence, and truly convert me into a wretched misanthrope, with the nurture of the poison of retaliation within me to return the retributive justice. Do they think men fools, as heretofore, that they usurp more than sovereign privilege? to exhibit

for their amusement any individual they think proper. It is blasphemy to oppress truth and the champion and vindicator of just principles and rational conduct. You, lawyer like, speak as if law was above reason and common sense, and even omnipotence. Can you see me outraged? Dare you see it? my revenge is in my own hands, and I will hurl it at their devoted heads. Better to die in the cause of truth, and defend it as an honest man would his treasure, at the dagger's point, from the invading assassin of his peace, or with the pistol's muzzle, than yield to such indignity. Take my answer to the wretches who sent it to see what I can bear and what I will not bear, or I shall believe even you are leagued against me ; my father, too, has but little sense of honour or integrity of principle belonging to him, thus to suffer me to be degraded in the opinion of the public. Had I told a lie, I would submit to anything ; but, standing as I do on the basis of truth, I bid defiance to every thing. For what is life but a cheat?—our institutions are tricks upon the understandings of men, to entrap the unwary ; convenience is all the aim of the government, and principle and humanity stand for nothing. Moral

principle is only a name to cheat the simple into efforts of industry for the benefit of church and state. To be honest is no longer profitable in the land, while knavery and lust thrive the best. I will never undergo this insult to my understanding, and he that dares inflict it must expect the knell of many. A man loaded as I am with disgrace for speaking truth, may be feared, and not without reason ; from henceforth I value not my life one straw, and but for a long premeditated revenge, which delay will enable me to execute, I would suffer no compromise or any concession whatever. So now take my answer : hostilities, and perpetual hostilities, may be expected from me as long as life lasts ; truth shall be the basis of my conduct in every action of my life, and since truth gives umbrage to one whore and her protectors, the clergy of England, I will unravel truths in future, by thousands ; nay, an army of them shall stare them in the face, like spectres of their past misdeeds. They think to cozen me into this tame submissal to their degrading practice. It is a new thing for me to learn that the bishops are harlot-watchers, or guardians to their assignations, and protectors of their insidious

influence upon society. It is surprising that you can see the injustice intended me, and not exclaim aloud against the impropriety of the act. Your calmness astonishes me; that you can see me agonized and not represent my cause, which is the cause of religion generally, and to be thus perverted to the base views of a harlot. Boast no more of our happy laws and constitution; happy indeed to those inflicting punishments, and not to those that obey."

"The cost of the action, Robert," said the lawyer, unmindful of his brother's impetuous taunts, "would be one hundred pounds or guineas, and perhaps three hundred guineas would not cover the costs on both sides; and if the court gives vindictive damages, one thousand guineas may not suffice to set you free."

"If such is the fact," said Ardent, relenting, "I exonerate my friends from any participation in this vile business. It is too much to be risked by my family, or even myself,—my all would not pay the half. Judgment must go by default; I cannot afford to defend the action, neither will I suffer any part of my family to become victims

with me; no, no! that would be too bad. I will take all responsibility upon myself; I know the worst,—I will meet the events with calmness, although it will be only an assumed tranquillity: death is preferable to contempt, and unless less rigorous measures can be thought of, I cannot comply, neither will I. What! stultify myself for a whore, protected as she is by the clergy of these realms! The church of Rome itself could require no more, and England never must expect to see it realized in me. So, now report my answer to government, or the hierarchy, or whoever may be concerned in the diabolical transaction. Recollect I am suffering in the cause of truth and honourable principles; my cause is good, and I dare them to do their worst. What! outrage common sense and common honesty. It would be hard indeed, in this land of boasted liberty, for innocence, however indiscreet, to become the victim of vice. Religion does not require it of me. It would be upholding the cause of whoredom, sustained by a junta of bishops, and breaking down the very bulwarks of society, by giving discountenance to marriage, which they are ordained to protect.”

“ Well, Robert, I will see what I can do for you to mitigate the wrath of the church.”

“ And you may say, at the same time, my wrath, or they shall surely repent it, them or their successors to the pastoral office ; for, although we are figuratively called sheep, we are not obliged to be slaughtered by the despotic will of the shepherd.”

“ You must have patience, brother, and let not this wicked woman see how much she has roused your indignation, and especially that you are wanting in real fortitude. I now leave you to see what can be done in mitigation, for it appears to me excessively severe.”

“ I would spend millions, John, if I had them, to prevent such a disgrace ; it is beyond all human patience ; I am no Job, and that they will find when it is too late to call this insult back again. The poor, and those who are not actually poor, have no defender, so long as law is only to be obtained at great costs, the ruin perhaps of whole families. I have not yet lost my spirit as a man, nor my indignation as an injured one ; so, good morning, and report what I have said, for this is termination having very little of comedy

in it. Such affairs as these, John, should be referred to a civil magistrate, and not to the clergy : they should not thus take the onus upon themselves,—they have enough to do to defend truth, or ought to have, and not to annihilate one of its principal champions and defenders. It appears to me they must be meddling with every dirty amour ; whether they soil their fingers or not, they care but little, so long as they have the perquisites of office and the advantages of judges in doubling their incomes. If this law is to be retained, why not retain the thumb-screw ? They both had their origin in Catholic times ; for to screw a man's thumb to pieces is of less evil than to crush his reputation. Report my observations and comments upon their propositions. Farewell !”

The two brothers left each other in sorrow ; the indignation of both was aroused ; but our hero, who seems to have had the highest sense of honour, felt the insult intended him in a more especial manner, and vituperated his resentment accordingly.

CHAPTER XIII.

It was at last made apparent to our hero that the mistress of his former affections possessed Machiavelian principles in no ordinary degree, and that her attorney was one of those remorseless beings that delight in mischief, or was in any way ready to take the advantage of the weakness of our laws and civil institutions, substituting, by a fallacy of reasoning, a widow lady, as she had always been acknowledged, with one son, to be now represented as a virgin character and spinster, and yet countenanced by the church. Such gross inconsistency was not detected by our hero or his attorney, upon whom he placed, as is usual, the most implicit reliance and confidence; but, not to be wanting to himself, the opinions of able men were taken, who all could see the folly and absurdity—nay, wickedness, of the accusation, yet all acquiesced in the formidable name of law, laughing, as they did, at its gross inconsistency in punishing the innocent for the guilty,

no unusual mistake, as will be sufficiently apparent hereafter.

Ardent, among other gentlemen of his acquaintance, thought proper to advise with the Reverend Mr. Aimwell, the vicar of the parish where the intended exhibition of slaughtered innocence was about to take place, and where a victim appeared necessary to the church to confirm their power and ability to punish delinquents who questioned the moral purity of their institutions, through ignorance or a want of information that any such existed; for so gross was the absurdity, that he disbelieved it for a time, and gave the divines credit for more sense than they were really deserving of, for little did he think such grossness of immorality could exist in our highly beneficed clergy, either then, now, or in times past, and that laws expressly framed for the protection of concubinage or mistress-keeping in this country, could be either directly or indirectly patronized and sanctioned by our pluralists and those orders who revel in the luxuries of life, while they devolve the duties of office, of the pastoral charge, upon their stipendiary curates, often proving the more worthy pastors of the

flock, are ill provided for: for while bishops and high dignitaries are each possessing from two to fifteen livings, the more respectable clergyman, who would benefit his parish by his residing among his flock, has the cold support of forty, fifty, or one hundred pounds the year, inefficient for a family, and a great injustice in the division of church property, resembling the monopoly in France previous to the revolution in that country; the inequality producing dissatisfaction, and at length leading to the complete spoliation of the church and of the hereditary domains called primogeniture. The greater the simplicity in church and state, the less is the danger from notions or principles of foreign or domestic growth, and the more steady will be the moving springs or principle of right conduct. Church and state may be considered as large manufacturing concerns: the chief partners or proprietors of these great manufactories consist of kings, lords, commons, and clergy, each bringing with them into the concern certain, or rather uncertain, proportions of advantage. Still it is to be presumed, for the sake of argument and proving something, that they really do bring some benefit

to the people, for whom the manufactories were originally established—as better food, clothing, and the like necessities of life, as well as more light than mud cabins would yield ; more cleanliness, more order, less pestilential vapour, &c. In all good governments these are always secured to poor people, and when not, it produces confusion, for the poor will be fed, clothed, &c., and it is very proper they should, for by the laws of nature, and in the simplicity of the earliest ages, land equally belonged to all men on the face of the earth, and is equally their inheritance, as much so as the grass of the field to the brute creation. None should perish through want,—no, not one ! for if hereditary laws are framed, constituting a few individuals as chief lords of the soil, it implies that others, such as the poor, are provided for, or a change of those laws injurious to the multitude must be at hand. On the same principle, malt and beer duties are oppressive, by depriving unjustly the poor of their proper sustenance or nourishing beverage, which is cruel and equally destructive to health and happiness, and which bring in their train war, desolation, and bloodshed.

Errors will creep in, it has been said, into the best-regulated families, institutions, and commonwealths ; still those errors should be rectified, or, like defective cogs in a wheel, they will convulse the machine, and at last destroy it. If the manufacturers of benefits to the public do not see inconveniences timely enough, or seeing them neglect them, what is the consequence?—The steam-engine, called the breath of the multitude, will have vent, and the manufactory is destroyed, whether it is church, state, Parliament, conventicle, or any other form professing to have an influence over the public mind. But this is deviating from the history of our hero and his jeopardy, the consequence of expressing his notions of right conduct, giving the world credit for more wisdom than it actually possessed, or now possesses.

Ardent wished to hear the opinion of the Reverend Mr. Aimwell, the worthy clergyman of his parish ; they were both reformers in their way, one with zeal, and the other within prescribed limits, as our church service promotes, and very properly so, upon most occasions. His walk was through the fields, being the nearest

way to the parsonage, as before mentioned ; and there he met with his friend and well-wisher, the Reverend Mr. Aimwell, the rector of the parish to which they belonged, and began his address in nearly the following manner :—

“ I am come, reverend sir, upon a very unpleasant errand, for the purpose of requesting that you would explain the nature of this ecclesiastical law, as far as I am concerned in the present action, which you have doubtless heard has been so very improperly commenced against me. I certainly do not mean to deny my having called this woman by the opprobrious name mentioned in the heat of my angry feelings, at her perseverance in prosecuting me under the pretence of breaking a pane of glass. It was spoken in the course of conversation, and at the end of an unsuccessful appeal to her son and Lawyer Rapine, to stay proceedings before they brought Mrs. Freelove to ruin and contempt, and preserve to her what remaining character she had left. The lawyer, by no means a respectable man, and whose principles are of the darkest character, took advantage of my impetuosity, which may be accounted for from the interest he has to promote the litigation

and harass by law expenses. But that the respectable part of the clergy should soil their hands in this disgraceful business is to me inexplicable. This lawyer has by no means consulted the benefit of his client, for was I to consent to stand the action against her, I have no doubt of being acquitted; but as it is, the expenses are so enormous as to preclude the possibility of so doing with any safety to myself or family: this I learn from my attorney. Had her lawyer either truth or equity for the basis of this action, an apology might be proposed, but as it is it cannot be offered, and he will, in the endeavour to inconvenience me, sink his own client deeper and deeper in the vortex of destruction, until she sinks finally into the depths of despair, with the annihilation perhaps of her property, if not of her life."

"What you say, Mr. Ardent, is very true; I am heartfelt sorry for your dilemma; I consider you as vindicating the cause and purity of religion generally, and rendering the whole parish an advantage which they are little sensible of. All I can do shall be done: I will, through the medium of certain persons, represent your situation to the higher powers, and possibly a considerable mitiga-

tion of the severity may be adopted. The most odious formalities and those parts of the solemnities, such as the white sheet and candle, I think I may safely assure you will not be required of you; probably some few words may be necessary to be used by you in the church, before me and the churchwardens, and that as a matter of form only, to prevent, in time to come, such words being made use of in a wanton and unlawful manner."

"You have relieved me, sir, in some degree, of part of the embarrassment; still it appears most strangely absurd that a man should be devoted to scorn and ridicule for daring to speak the truth; there must be an inconsistency somewhere, thus to select the innocent and doom him to the punishment of the guilty. It is publicly patronizing harlotry, equally as much so as that we read of in Scripture, which tells us King Solomon had three hundred wives and seven hundred concubines, which is countenancing the vices of the great, and animating them onwards to seduce wives and daughters, until they rival King Solomon in all his glory, proving our religion not to be founded on morals, but on convenience and

ingenious priestcraft in former ages, which now requires a revision. Was she an innocent and a virtuous woman who had done no wrong, there is no injury I could receive would be too much for me to undergo; but, as it is, I cannot think that any punishment should be inflicted upon me. Your own representation to the higher powers ought to be sufficient, without exposing me to the ridicule and contempt of the multitude, and making religion itself become the jest of all good men; for on what principle of right can the clergy, or any other class of the community, oppress truth at any time? There must be some fault in our laws and civil institutions, as they are termed, although they are as uncivil as if framed in the barbaric ages of the world,—

‘ When ignorance was bliss,
And it was folly to be wise.’

And allow me to ask you, sir, how it came to pass that the clergy should thus become the panders or protectors of vice and immorality, as if they presided over houses of ill-fame rather than England’s church establishment. The Saviour of the world was a moral man; marriage, and not concubinage, was the subject of his

panegyric ; and why the apostles of the present day should hold a different doctrine to the apostles of the Saviour, I have yet to learn. There must have been some inconsistency existing in our church laws in times past, and even at the present time, as it now appears.”

“ To call a woman a whore, Mr. Ardent, in times past—that is, in the ancient times of Popery, and when the English church acknowledged the Pope of Rome as its supreme head,—was a sin of great enormity, and amenable to their old ecclesiastical law. This obsolete law has never been repealed, and you are, unfortunately, labouring under the severity of its lash ; for in those times marriage was unlawful to the priests, and the clergy, not being permitted to have wives, had housekeepers or concubines, and, as they were liable to be insulted by the laity, from being called opprobrious names, such as we have been speaking of, security against such transgressions was naturally enough demanded by their ladies, and the priests and higher orders of the church, to flatter them and make them more secure from insult, assented ; and this gave rise to this famously severe old law : and woe to the indis-

cretion of the person or persons who subjected himself to it! for it was inflicted without mercy and with its most odious formalities, as sheet and candle, with other observances, the characteristics of that period of time, when the human mind was besotted in ignorance, and the clergy and the higher powers did as they thought proper, without control or restraint, so long as it was sanctioned by the Pope of Rome. Since which time a revolution has taken place in religion; both church and state have undergone a change: marriage is now permitted to the clergy of this country, so that there at present remains no longer a necessity for that severity, unless in very flagrant instances—as a virtuous woman being calumniated—then I think no punishment too severe; but this law is seldom brought forward, and requires to be repealed.”

“ Then, this old law is, as I suspected, a remnant of Popery, and a barbarous engine for the protection of immorality in those days, and still retained to countenance the immorality of the rich and higher classes of society; thus enabling them to triumph over the laws of bigamy, and the prohibitions of the seventh commandment,

‘that thou shalt not commit adultery,’ proving that the clergy themselves, in this instance, make a mockery of religion, and a jest of God’s commandments to mankind. It is under the sanction of such laws that divorces are so frequently the consequences, proving a perpetual source of emolument to the dignified clergy of this boasted land of British freedom, disseminating ill principles and vices over the land. And this is called toleration, and a highly civilized country, when it is a land of concubinage and mistress-keeping, from the throne to the cottage, and sanctioned by the most respectable clergy in the world, as they are called, and, by this evidence, very improperly. The pluralist clergy are too rich to be a pure people: they imitate, in some instances, the vices of the great, and share the industry of the people by a monopoly of tithes and church preferment. It is by planting vices about the country, or countenancing them indirectly, I have fell into a snare, when I should, but for this trap of concubinage, have become a married man, respectable in society and a credit to myself and family; but now, from law and justice being placed beyond my reach, I am doomed to undergo

the penalty of base laws, founded on baser institutions, that of countenancing immorality in the clergy of these realms in times past, and extending the same immoral practice to the public generally at the present time, beginning at the fountain head of all honour, and descending through every grade of life."

"I will take care of your interest, Mr. Ardent, and represent your peculiar case to the higher powers."

"I am very much obliged to you, reverend sir, for protecting me from such gross outrage as this old and infamously immoral ecclesiastical law, which cannot be submitted to in the present day by any generous mind, and reflects the greatest odium upon the persons or church requiring it."

"You have not so much to apprehend as you expect, and I repeat again, I will be careful of your feelings and sensibilities upon this important and painful occasion. I am informed this law is to be repealed, and wish it may for your sake, but I fear it will be some time first;" and, so saying, he wished Ardent good morning, and left him.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE feelings of our hero were of a very serious cast—no longer the lover, but a victim of the system of concubinage, which has existed in this country of polished manners and libertine principles, from the times of ignorance, and superstition, and barbarism, down to the days of Chesterfield's Letters ; and continued by many, both in practice and principle, to the present time.

Ardent was perpetually puzzling himself and others for solutions of the mysterious nature of his peculiar situation, and endeavouring to make that appear reasonable to his own mind which was of itself incongruous, and inconsistent with the professions of the pulpit and the outward forms of religion. It appeared to be an abuse of temporal power, placed in their hands by the Pope of Rome, and confirmed by the legislature of this country ; but of this he was uncertain, being still in his novitiate. It was a delicate

investigation: he had by chance, it seemed, fallen from the clouds into the harem or seraglio of a great man, but who that great man was, still remained one of nature's or the artificers of man's profoundest secrets. The lady appeared well supplied with money,—no want, no appearance of the law wearing itself out by its own expense or cost; it was all a mystery to Ardent, who it could be that supplied the funds for the prosecution against him.—Was it the great unknown phantom, or genii of the forest, called her uncle, or any other subordinate agent and tool of her contrivance, or her own *bonâ fide* property. But all this had nothing to do with the decision of the church: in their grave assembly of ecclesiastical polity, the ladies were always under their more especial care; either their beauty influenced at one time, or their property at another. In either case Ardent was a sufferer; for if beauty framed the laws, money now enabled those laws to be placed in full force against him, or as much so as was consistent with the safety and convenience of the clergy, without calling down upon them the public ridicule and the public censure; as will sufficiently appear by the communication

made at this time by Lawyer Ardent, who had just arrived from the metropolis with a budget of information, having himself watched the progress of the law proceedings against his brother with indefatigable industry.

Petticoat influence has always more or less to do with the destiny of every individual, and, as it had operated in times past to protect themselves during the celibacy of the clergy, it was now exerted to destroy our reformer of immoral principles and would-be renovator of society, by bringing him, if possible, into contempt, through the medium of the public mind: on the same principle was Jesus Christ crucified, and the apostles stoned to death, devoured by wild beasts, or otherwise destroyed. The worthy bishops, also, who brought about the reformation, were burnt at the stake, and the reformers generally, by fire, faggot, pincers, and other cruelties peculiar to Popish times in this country. Our hero was a nondescript: his case no doubt puzzled the whole bench of bishops to decide what to do with him; he was evidently a sufferer in the cause of principle, and yet to let him escape without some animadversion seemed impossible, particu-

larly as there was the old obsolete law standing against him. What could the reverend bench do in this dilemma?—They did as was expected, mitigated the wrath of the church against their offending and offended protégé or partisan; for Ardent was a great vindicator of right, but, in his attempt to restore right, he perpetually blundered upon wrong conduct, because the times were then not so ripe for innovation or reform as they will become at a future period, when the next revolution (if not changed before) will remove these odious formalities with the law itself.

The lawyer Ardent opened his green bag and produced the famous documentary evidence, that the reverend bench had mitigated our hero's punishment; it was now he began to compare himself to those celebrated characters and public declaimers from the pulpit — Martin Luther, Whitfield, and even Wesley, or last, though not least, Lancaster himself, of notorious celebrity, who has laid the foundation of promulgating infantine knowledge to remote ages. In such class our reformer, Ardent, wished to be considered in his early attempts to reform the world, by

beginning his operations in a remote village in the centre of Windsor Forest; and in this, his ludicrous attempt to reform the manners of the age, he may have been said to receive that reward he most richly deserved, in the estimation of some individuals, although not in others.

But not to detain the reader longer in suspense with more preliminary or introductory matter, we must now come to the declaration of Lawyer Ardent, who was the harbinger of agreeable and disagreeable news—agreeable as concerned the mitigated penalty for speaking truth, and disagreeable, as it was necessary to perform or exhibit any part of it in a public church, for the amusement and edification of other people.

The brother of our hero then began: “The bishop of the diocese has commuted your punishment to reading the following statement; and it must be read, after Divine service in the forenoon, before the Reverend Mr. Ajmwell and the churchwardens. It runs thus:—

“ “ “ Whereas, I, Robert Ardent, have called, before a witness, Elizabeth Freelove, Spinster, a whore; I am sorry for the same, and this I do

ceive, to satisfy any moderate expectation, for so slight an offence as speaking truth before a witness, however disagreeable that truth may have been.”

“ Then let the devil have his due, whether in the Church of England or out of it : ‘ The nearer the church, the further from God.’ ”

CHAPTER XV.

THERE can be no doubt but our hero was sorely injured in his feelings, perhaps more so than he outwardly chose to evince by appearing concerned at what was very galling to his sensibilities and notions of right conduct. I will not affirm that he wished the whole race of bishops, especially the bishop of the diocese, one of those noxious diseases that are said to infest the box of Pandora, to the danger of the loss of his or their noses or any other member ; but, it may be admitted, he was very angry, as, indeed, he had a right to be, not only with himself, but with all the Popes of Rome, who continued this old law, to cover their own gross immorality from the lower orders of the people.

“ This penance,” said our hero, “ commuted into six lines for me to read, is not contradicting but confirming, before a large assembly of people, the very obnoxious word I have been so much reprovèd for, and which has excited so much

attention in our village, through the industry of Lawyer Rapine, who, glorying in mischief, is fixing his own condemnation and his client's at the same time; for, in fact, it is not so much a triumph as a defeat, attended with insult and affronts to both parties, which would have come from any quarter with a better grace than the defenders of morals, originating, as it does, from so foul a source as their own imperfections, or those of their predecessors, the Catholic clergy. If this penance is not a burlesque farce upon all seriousness, I know not what is; it is certainly the prelude to a deep tragedy. My nerves may stand the shock, but the poor deluded woman will become the wreck of her own vindictiveness, and will at last relent when it is too late. What does all this prove, but that law is too expensive, and that none but the rich can vindicate themselves? After all, it is a foolish piece of business, and there has been much said and done merely for calling a woman by her real appellation instead of a wrong one. It is holding the candle and lantern to her own condemnation: she will henceforth become an object of pity, for vengeance, ill-timed and misplaced, is sure to recoil with

tenfold interest upon the transgressors." Our hero continued his mental cogitations : " As I am not obliged to perform," thought he, " this most pious of all duties in holy mother church this Sunday, I will decline exhibiting myself until the Sunday after : and, as it is a fine day, I will ride to see my father, who is, no doubt, greatly provoked, not only at the disappointment of my marrying a respectable young woman, but at this insult brought upon me through the artifice of a crafty woman and my own angry feelings dictating a silly word, which would have been far better for all parties to have suppressed."

These were after-reflections, and our hero little thought the agony of mind he was afterwards to undergo through one false step—that of not following his father's counsel. Reflect, young men, ere it is too late, how you deviate from parental commands, for the world is widely different from what you expect : there is a spring-time of life called youth and early manhood ; a summer promising or blighted ; and an autumn fruitful with expectations only or realities, as the spring and summer confirm or prevent. The winter will also come, cheerless and uncomfortable, or the

reverse, all depending upon ability well applied, and no blunders by the way—as, mistaking artificial characters for real ones; the sophistry of reasoning for reason and prudence; the artifices of cunning for the dictates of wisdom and common sense. Such has been the experience of our hero, which will be narrated as a warning to youth of both sexes.

Shortly after the receipt of this document, Ardent, mounted on his Bucephalus, was crossing the heath or wilds of the forest, meditating an oration or speech on his peculiar situation, and it occurred to his mind, that, upon a great occasion, Themistocles had conceived a considerable project, which was not proper to be communicated to the public; therefore they, the Athenians, selected Aristides to be the depository of the secret, affirming he was the most proper person to be depended on. The communication was made, and Aristides gave it as his opinion it would be highly convenient, but, at the same time, most unjust. Now, our hero thought he perceived a parallel between his case and the secret entrusted to Aristides, and, had the bishop of the diocese made as judicious a reply as that great man of

ancient renown, these volumes in all probability would never have seen the light ; but Divine Providence works his own secret will and pleasure, by visible and by invisible means, and our hero may be considered as an humble instrument in his hands for purposes to be explained hereafter.

Ardent having arrived about the middle of the heath, was considerably astonished to meet with a great concourse of people ; wondering where they could be going at that early part of the day, he addressed them in a courteous manner for an explanation. Now, any individual less abstracted and distracted than our hero, would naturally have penetrated the reason of this mysterious movement of the foresters so early on a Sunday morning, being about the hour of church-time ; but it did not occur to him that he was the lion of the forest they were going to see exhibit himself in a white sheet and candle, as they had been informed, and, therefore, one and all came with that motive and principle. But their conversation, as it occurred, will throw most light upon the subject, and for this purpose it is inserted.

“ Where are you going, my good people, at this time on a Sunday forenoon ?” said Ardent.

“We are come, one and all, for miles round, to see a rare sight, such as has not been seen for many a long day,” rejoined one of the most forward of the group.

“And what is the sight?” inquired our profoundly ignorant inquisitor, still lost in bewilderment, and unconscious of every thing but the moving scene before him; as was often his case when abstracted by deep meditation upon philosophical inquiries, or endeavouring to unriddle hidden mysteries. The reply was like a clap of thunder pealing in his ears, which startled him in a moment, and brought back into painful activity his mental reflections upon late events, and their contingent consequences.

“We are,” said the foresters, “going to see a man stand in a white sheet with a tallow candle in his hand, and he is to read the Lord’s Prayer backwards.”

This was too much for our hero, who could scarce refrain from informing them there would be no exhibition that day; but, as their curiosity had brought them thus far, he said calmly—“It is a foolish affair,” and passed onward, himself and horse one way, and the foresters the other,

towards the very parish he had but recently left.

Such was the state of affairs, and Ardent did not exhibit in his canonicals that day, but went to his father to consult him upon the strangeness of the occurrence, and whether it should be complied with or not : for to him it seemed a gross inconsistency, and every way calculated to shock decency and common sense—not more prejudicial to religion than to good manners, and, in fact, an injury to both. But the ways of life are progressive, and so is the acquirement of wisdom. Nations, like individuals, are slow of perceiving the ridicule attached to particular actions, until exposed to the glaring comments of a multitude, quick to perceive and apt to express their assent or dissent.—This is called public opinion, the regulator of most governments.

CHAPTER XVI.

ARDENT having consulted with his father and family, they requested him to consider the penance as a light affair, not at all reflecting upon his veracity, but rather his want of prudence ; and counselled him to go through the business, unpleasant as it was, with as good a grace as could be assumed, and not give farther offence by withstanding the decrees of the ecclesiastical court ; for, however erroneous it might appear, still, as the law was not repealed, it was virtually a law of the land, and, in the present imperfect state of society, it seemed absolutely necessary that the comparatively innocent should suffer with the guilty ; that there evidently was a mystery connected with this lady, and it might yet be several years before it would be disclosed, and, certainly, not early enough to prevent the present inconvenience. After all, the punishment was but momentary, if the mind was made up to undergo the present

insult: injustice lay somewhere, and, as the guilty could not be laid hold of, the innocent must suffer for the guilty; this appeared plain, and too self-evident to be denied. Who the great unknown was, yet remained a profound secret; he might be the bishop of the diocese, the archbishop, the grand Turk, or the great Mogul: whoever he was, his secret was still preserved with the most inviolable fidelity. There was even a terror belonging to the degree of uncertainty of who he was; whether he had influence at court, or a preponderating and overwhelming interest at the court of Canterbury; how far he might be the director of the engine and principles brought against our hero, as from a masked battery, or by a catapulta-like blow, the more to be dreaded as the machinery was invisible to all but those moving the springs, or whatever was the power, force, or influence, to crush our unfortunate Ardent.

In this state of doubt and indecision, Ardent returned to the Forest, when the heavens appeared more than usually angry that night, as if portentous of some great calamity: the thunders rolled, lightnings flashed, and earth appeared shook to

its foundations. It was awfully grand and sublime; at least, so it appeared to Ardent, when upon an elevated station of the forest, on one of those commanding hills from which he sometimes viewed the wide expanse of dreary waste, that was illuminated at intervals with solemn grandeur and sublimity. It was one of those nights in which the weary traveller sighed for home, and lamented the distance from shelter to screen him from the pelting storm, as his horse with fright occasionally turned his back upon the hurricane: again all was light in the heavens and on the earth, succeeded by impenetrable darkness, so profound as not to perceive the dreary way, and no longer could be discerned the two holly trees, by the roadside in the vale below, as landmarks by daylight of the proper ride leading to his habitation; for here the roads diverged different ways, and but for the lightnings' flash, the star-like radii of the forest rides would have been indistinguishable, for here, at the obelisk mound, they centred at a point. To a superstitious mind it would have been an awful prelude of some disaster, but not so with Ardent: he placed his head at the saddle-bow, and braved the inclemency of the heavens,

and the sandy silt-like quality of the road was spurned by the horse's hoofs, as if indignant at the impediment which restrained his flight by receding from beneath his wayward footsteps.

Upon the following morning, the victim of a capricious lady recovered his tranquillity of mind to a certain extent, which had been so repeatedly assailed nearly to its overthrow. It appeared to himself as if he was foredoomed to a multiplicity of inconveniences which had never entered his imagination as possible. It was a sort of fatality that he was obliged to undergo ; it was the caprice of fate, or the doctrine of the chances exemplified in himself ; it was the decree of Divine Providence, or the control of some great ruling power over his destiny, mixed, as it was, with the caprices of life and the anomaly of suffering, through vindictiveness of the most consummate artifice, practised upon credulity the most profound and the least susceptible of conviction ; that he was in an error as to the judgment he had formed of the individual who had thus ruined his peace of mind, and was now fast striving to overwhelm his fortunes also. The inhabitants of the village thought it incongruous for a man to be punished

for speaking the truth ; it was inexplicable—it conveyed the idea that there was imperfection in our laws or in our institutions ; that one or other was defective, and wanted reforming, reclaiming, or expunging : such was the state of the villagers' opinions. Our hero joined the public sentiment, and the whole was looked upon as a jest or humbug upon public credulity, punishing for no crime, but because the sins of the priesthood in former days required countenancing and protecting, and, therefore, it was deemed requisite in some particulars by the present clergy, who, either on the part of themselves or others, retained this baneful law, oppressive to freedom and the liberty of the subject.

The compliance on the part of Ardent was thought of in its true light, that of saving costs, and thereby refuting the aim of the woman, whose object, as well as that of her attorney's, appeared to be to ruin him by law expenses—the strongest purse prevailing, as it almost always does in all law actions long contested ; much the same as want of ammunition obliging many a valiant man to surrender a fortress or citadel, which, in other circumstances, would have been defended. It

was thus Ardent compromised with ill fortune, by choosing the less evil to avoid the greater : no great forbearance is due to the priests, for, instead of insisting upon this indignity being complied with by our hero, the law should have been repealed ; as was the case with Lord Cochrane, who, upon being sentenced to stand in the pillory, that vile law was abrogated or removed in his favour, as one of those remaining barbarisms that had its origin in the feudal ages of man's ignorance and imbecility of mind, that stooped to much meanness and degradation from the want of knowing better.

As the Reverend Mr. Aimwell was the friend of Ardent, our hero thought it necessary to make him some apology for his non-performance on the previous Sunday, and therefore called upon his friend and well-wisher—but what is one man among a multitude ?—However, his voice was heard and the mitigation adopted, or it never could have been complied with at all, but might have banished him from the forest, like Aristides from Athens, by ostracism. The extenuation alleged was, that it was quite early enough to degrade himself in a just cause at the last moment,

and not one moment earlier than was absolutely necessary.

The Reverend Mr. Aimwell's reply was dignified and considerate, saying, it must positively be done next Sunday, or heavy penalties would fall on both—on Ardent, in not having read the lines, and himself in not having seen it done: "So, go through with it," said the divine, "and with as good a grace as you possibly can."

"Then, reverend sir, I will thank you to let it be read at that period of time when the public have left the church."

"Very well," replied the friend of Ardent; "although it would be quite different if you had spoken an untruth; all the village know you have a very artful woman to do with, and a very ill-principled lawyer, and that she is glad to give this appearance of redeeming her character and deluding investigation. This is not, in fact, a trespass you have committed against religion, but a breach of the peace, which, by right, should have been cognizable to civil law only, and not to ecclesiastical. It is an old obsolete law, that should have been repealed, and, it is expected, will be next session of Parliament;

but, unfortunately, before that can take place, you are liable to the consequences of its omission, and therefore, we must submit to this act of injustice."

"Sir, as you and my relations think it best to comply," returned Ardent, "I will undergo what you think a trifling punishment, which will reflect more disgrace on the inflictors than their victim; with the remembrance, at a future period of my life, of retaliating with interest the injury now about to be inflicted."

In this way Ardent and his friend, the Reverend Mr. Aimwell, reasoned over the affair, disagreeable to both, and, but for the endangering his friend in the loss of his gown, would not have been complied with.

CHAPTER XVII.

IT was a saying of the great Lord Bacon, that literary men require inventories of their knowledge, as rich men have schedules of their estates. Nothing can be more true, for without the pen and the press, more than nine-tenths of the world's wisdom would be lost, and the benefits to be derived by a future age would be traditional lore only, or oral communications, instead of manuscript writing and printed information; for which blessings we are indebted to the discoveries of the last few hundred years, which will sufficiently account for the slow progress of the human mind up to the present period, when arts and sciences may still be considered in their infancy, or progression towards permanent improvement. Morals and religion, as well as physical and legal knowledge, have undergone similar improvements since the dark ages of church history, but are now about to be renewed with additional utility and sublimity.

The mind of our hero, when he first entered into the regions of the forest, may have been compared to a tablet, unoccupied as far as worldly wisdom was concerned ; and his father used this expression, that he was the most ignorant young man in worldly affairs he ever knew at his age. It was a simplicity of character and conduct almost unparalleled, and, in fact, may have been considered completely original in all points of view. It may be accounted for in the following manner—that Ardent was early a book man, and having lived a secluded life in very reputable families in the medical department, cultivated a knowledge of books with great assiduity, and selected the most worthy characters of antiquity and modern life for his examples and imitation ; all other characters, as those who formed the darkest shades of the drama of human life, he paid very little attention to, excepting, perhaps, fixing his knuckles into the page, as a mark of his detestation and disapprobation. In fact, to think of bad characters was a pain to him, while the reverse always attended the contemplation of the good and wise : that he tried to forget there were indifferent characters in the world, and

strove to banish them from his recollection, preferring the life of simplicity and artlessness to stratagem, deceit, and the worldly artifices of deception, practised, but too frequently, by the generality of mankind, in their intercourse with society; so that it will be very plainly perceived he was a character prepared, at all points, to meet the blows of fortune in no ordinary measure or degree, for, while he was opposing the stream of tumultuary passions with the valour of his own single arm, the stream ran so forcibly against him as to overwhelm the young philosopher—as is usual, both now and in times past, with all men who make themselves busy with others' affairs, or endeavour, by their own single opinion, to stem the ill-usages of ages, and the tempest of disorderly passions in themselves and other people.

After all that can and may be said, experience is wisdom, as much so as the light is reflected from the Eddystone rocks to guard the inexperienced from those fatal shores. The man of straw, or the battle of opinion, is often produced for the sake of the argument, or to elicit truths which could not so well be managed without; and our hero was often an interested spectator of those

conflicts, which he had no business to meddle with any more than the man in the moon—that is, in those battles of wordy warfare in which a young man of twenty-five years, secluded from the world, could be little expected to compete, as it requires much experience, deep research, and after reflection to elucidate : but what the hero was incompetent to in early life, twenty years of after-study prepared him to take the field. But we have now to relate other particulars connected with this history, and show the views, opinions, and sentiments of the opposite party.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ON the Sunday following the disappointment of the public regarding the exhibition of our hero in his canonicals, as was humorously observed by some, was assembled in the house of Mrs. Free-love, Lawyer Rapine, with herself and son, that being the day on which the penance was performed. The conversation turned, as was very natural, upon late events.

The dinner being over, and the wine introduced, the conversation thus commenced, by Lawyer Rapine remarking he had placed her late rebellious lover in the harness of the church.

“They will teach him to call a virtuous lady an opprobrious name again, as long as he lives; the chain of Cupid was nothing in comparison to the bondage, slavery, and degradation with which he has been shackled this day.”

“I am now sorry for it, Lawyer Rapine.”

“You sorry, mother?” said her hopeful son.

“I wish he had been punished to the utmost

limits of the law, or spiked in a barrel, as Regulus was of old, that notorious old Roman, who counselled the fall of Carthage. You, mother, have been his Carthage, and he, like an ancient Roman, triumphs over you and me."

"It was to have been performed, Freelove," said Lawyer Rapine, "last Sunday, but he braved the anger of the laws, and disappointed a whole army of foresters, who I had made it my business to inform, by riding round to all the villages and hamlets within many miles. They came by my instruction to witness the glorious spectacle, as rare an occurrence in England as an auto-da-fé in Catholic countries, and also to be spectators of your triumph over him."

"It was not a quarter of the punishment it ought to have been, Rapine: there was neither sheet nor candle, as you told me and my mother. I suspect you have played us booty, and have compromised the affair, as you did in the last cause."

"No, Freelove, no: I am a man of honour, and I disdain your underhand work and base insinuation. You may think yourself pretty well off to obtain what you did from the ecclesiastical

court, as it was in doubt whether or not the obsolete law should not have been abrogated altogether, on purpose to give Ardent an opportunity of escaping, as they considered him suffering in the cause of the church—in fact, as a champion of their order. Had it not been for his well-known good character and honest motives, as they were pleased to term them, we should have had a full triumph over him. As it was, it was a glorious spectacle to see a man, and a young man, too, who had spoken the truth, as was generally believed, notwithstanding all I could say to the contrary, doing penance for speaking it in these times of reformed manners and sensibilities of propriety, making out the old saying not to be true, ‘that you may speak truth and shame the devil.’ Was it nothing to get the ecclesiastical court to act contrary to their own principles, merely to keep in countenance an old musty Popish record? It is worthy of the big wigs how they have changed sides: first of all, when they were not allowed wives, as in Catholic times in this country, they made this famous law to protect their ladies, and now times are changed in England, this law is retained to keep in counte-

nance those ladies, who are convenient and agreeable to other people, as though every senator in the land was a mandarin or bashaw with three tails, while the clergy, and ordinary individuals, have but one or two at most. What else can be inferred? for surely the husband can protect his wife, or the civil power can protect both. Ha! ha! ha! I cannot help laughing at the busy officiousness of the priests in former days,—that is, in times past, which has extended itself to the present, intermeddling with every thing concerning the women. They must be near the trimmings of the petticoat. In fact, I do not know what the clergy would do without the women; taking them under their protection, they may very well be said to exist only under petticoat government.”

“And pray, Mr. Rapine,” said the lady, “mention any order of society, even from the throne to the cottage, that does not acknowledge the sovereignty of the women? Men are subordinate to the women in all ranks and grades of life: they slave for them, toil for them, think for them, fight for them, and all for their pleasure and amusement; and never are they so happy as

when they can lay their trophies or fruits of industry, toil, and trouble at our feet, and request our acceptance of their labours, their honours, or their enjoyments. I have heard much said of the sovereignty of the people; now every man is ruled by his wife or mistress, and wo be to him who disputes our authority; witness Ardent, who disputed my authority over him, and I have humbled him. I could mention thousands—nay, tens of thousands of instances: did not the women rule David, Solomon, and all the kings of the earth, down to the present auspicious era, with the exception of our glorious monarch, George the Third, who is governed by his own good sense, to the confusion of the artful and ambitious of our sex.”

“ This is a very ticklish subject indeed, madam; the sooner we get from it the better. The ladies have always had considerable influence upon society, and ever will,—it is the will of Divine Providence that it should be so; so that you see, madam, the devil can quote Scripture authority, when required to serve his purpose in argumentation. But, to resume the subject of our debate, that of Ardent being placed within the cognizance

of this old-fashioned ecclesiastical law : luckily, I was your witness, madam."

" I know it but too well, Mr. Rapine, and at one time it would have given me pleasure, but it now gives me sorrow. I would have recalled the punishment, had it not been for my character. It was to recall that back, Mr. Rapine, I authorized you to institute this action against Ardent, my former friend and lover. By this penance I expected to silence the censorious."

" Mother, your character is now free from reproach ; don't you think so, Rapine ?"

" Perfectly so, perfectly so ; who dares to say the contrary within my hearing shall feel the punishment without the mitigation. Here is to the health of ladies of character, madam !"

" With all my heart, Mr. Rapine ; for woman, however lovely she may be, is nothing without character."

" Suppose, Rapine," said young Freelove, for argument sake, " that Ardent had not performed this penance inflicted upon him by the church and in the church, what then would have happened to him ?"

" He would have been fined, and imprisoned

until the fine was paid; and besides which, he would have been excommunicated, and in fact outlawed, with all the spiritual visitations, such as, in case of death, to have refused him Christian burial, and treated him like a dog, and, possibly, have knocked him on the head. Such are the blessings which attend those who differ from the decrees of church authority, even in these days of Protestant ascendancy, when the church has great power, which they derived originally from the Pope of Rome, during the reign of the weak princes of England, who suffered them to grasp too much authority over the people, which they still retain and hug as they do their vices,—under the rose be it spoken. Had he resisted the performance of this ceremony, he would have been anathematized as a profane person, for not complying with the church discipline and the authority of the prelates, who are in their hearts, notwithstanding all their appearance of humility, rank Catholics, not in religion, but in a lust of temporal power and authority, which they do not like to relinquish, as it is convenient upon several occasions connected with their interest, and imposing upon the credulity of ignorant and weak-

v minded people ; and let the imposition upon Ardent have been founded upon ever so right or wrong a principle, it would have been the same thing, for how many poor clergymen in England have lost their gowns for only speaking the truth publicly. Art, craft, and artifice, are the ruling principle of men's actions, and not truth ; what will please and amuse, and not what is fact ;—for had he been murdered when under this ban, it would not have excited notice. A person outlawed, let him be ever so innocent, is out of the pale of civil society, and no inquiry or coroner's inquest could have sat upon his body, and his bones might have rotted in the blast from the heath, and have nourished blue bells, heath flowers, perhaps fir-trees, or furzes to hide the game with."

" Drop the subject, Mr. Rapine ; it becomes painful." Having said this, the lady took her departure from the room, and the son and the attorney were left to themselves, which the young man perceiving, availed himself of, by saying, " Now, my hearty, push round the bottle ; drink—drink success to Ardent in the regions of darkness, or, in other words, the next world."

“ With all my heart, Freelove; success to him in the regions most sublime—his Satanic majesty’s. Let those laugh who win; ha! Freelove.”

“ Yes, yes ; we will laugh, Rapine, as we have sufficient reason ; I will now sing you a song,” which the artful attorney encouraged, remembering the grist brought to his mill, as he familiarly termed it, by the vengeance of the mother and the folly of the son, neither of them fully perceiving the precise character of the man they had to do with, who had thus deprived them, under specious appearances of protecting them, of the last remains of their respectability in life. Young Freelove, without farther preliminary, began his song :—

“ Send round the glass, fill it up to the brim,
And when it with generous heat hath inspired us,
We’ll drink to the fair one so lovely and slim,
Whose beauty and graces with madness have fired us.

“ For say what is wine, though it sparkles so finely,
Drowns sorrow and care, clips time of its wing,
Without lovely woman, who looks so divinely ;
For of woman, dear woman, I ever will sing.

Then fill up each glass, and toast the dear creatures ;
Let every one sing of his heart's best delight,—
Be her eyes blue or black, brown or fair be her features,
We'll toast them at morning, noon, evening, and night."

" Very well sung, Freelove ! I must now take my leave, it is growing late, and your mother has retired, being out of spirits ; so, farewell," said he, shaking him by the hand. Birds of a feather will flock together, you know, and as constantly are they associated as the bottle and the glass, or the swain and his lass—ha ! ha ! ha ! I can stay no longer." Having thus made his speech, he retired for that time, soon to be followed, or rather his place supplied by, the law expenses attending the prosecution of our hero, the unsuccessful Ardent, who, from apprehension of consequences, or the fears excited by pecuniary embarrassments, consented to submit to an indignity rather than involve his family in inconvenience and distress, or, by braving the church, involve himself in endless outlawry, and his friend, the Reverend Mr. Aimwell, in the danger of losing his gown. For, as there was no defence set up, judgment was obliged to go by default,

and which defence the author is of the opinion should have been at least attempted, at all hazards ; but such is the uncertainty of law processes in this country, that the wisest are said to put up with considerable injuries rather than contest them.

CHAPTER XIX.

WE have now arrived at that period of our history called its climax: the ecclesiastical penance has been gone through by our hero, to avoid the still further evils of the wrath of the church upon his non-compliance; for, however harmless the thunders of the Protestant church may be considered, they have still a spice remaining of the church of Rome in its most intolerant days, as those of Bonner, Gardiner, Cardinal Pole, and many others deriving their dignity and consequence from the Vatican of the court of Rome, in the days of superstition, tyranny, and the inquisition. So that, however pure the church doctrine of England may be considered, that it has many defects in its policy must certainly be allowed; but this would require such a long course of argumentative reasoning to prove, that it must not even be attempted in these pages.

We will now subjoin a conversation that passed between our hero and his friend Rhymer, the

village poet, as explanatory of the present posture of affairs.

“It is done, thank God,” said Ardent to his friend Rhymer: “a more disagreeable business I never went through, in my life; thanks to the friendly disposition of the Reverend Mr. Aimwell, only himself and the churchwardens were present, except some few of the parishioners who were looking in at the windows.”

“The foresters, being disappointed last Sunday,” said Rhymer, “considered themselves hoaxed, and the native villagers thought no more of it than as a matter of form. To enumerate the misfortunes that have befallen you, Ardent, will by the many be thought unnecessary, and by the few as affording a wholesome lesson that good intentions, without experience, are often an ill match for long-practised cunning and deceit. There are many men and women in all ranks of life, from the highest to the lowest, who practise deception for the purpose of imposing upon the unsuspecting character; whereas, had they the principles of honesty, and could foresee the mischief they do their victim, they would repent; for I hold it to be a maxim, that an injury done to one is an injury

to both, as in the present instance. If the vicious would cease to lay snares to entrap the unpractised in the guile of this world, and, if only for their own sakes, allow to be at rest machinations which are infernal in their consequences, as much so as if invented by demons of another world, then, and then only, would happiness reign on earth."

"That mankind, Mr. Rhymer, should be so ignorant of the value of truth, which is the basis of all society, is wonderful, and excites my astonishment to the utmost degree; I think, it is to be attributed to the defects of education and the want of suitable examples. False representation is become a trade—nay, I think, forms the most considerable part of every profession, and belongs to all ranks of men. Almost all men practise it; few are exempt, and those few punished for their indiscretion. I am an instance," said our hero, "and if I am thus to be punished for speaking it, I fear I have a great deal to undergo, for to speak truth is as natural to me as falsehood to some other people. As education is now becoming general, viciousness arising from ignorance may be expected to be more rare, and

examples of truth, religion, piety, and virtue, be placed henceforth before the eyes of the rising generation, which will very much assist to ameliorate the afflictions of mankind. The providences of God, Rhymer, are great and many: if man loses the right path, and is puzzled in the mazes and labyrinths of this world, let him still look to his fair fame and his conductress, Truth, and she will point the way to guide the mind that is willing to follow her footsteps, and, like the solidity of wisdom, protect him and mitigate his wrongs; and, though late, he shall not be without hope."

"There are many men, Mr. Ardent, who have so small a discernment, that they are liable to imposition, especially where the artist is long practised in the ways of deceit."

"It must be admitted, Mr. Rhymer, there are many vices and falsehoods which have so strong a resemblance to truth and fair dealing, that it is only the experienced can perceive the shades of difference, and even they, I have heard, are sometimes for a long period deceived, so strong has been the analogy; for Hypocrisy, by her Proteus-like arts, will assume the virtues she has not."

"You have been unfortunate, Ardent, and yet

you bear up against it with philosophy. You have been too credulous, and your good-nature and easy confidence have injured you both. She was a pleasing woman, you admired her, she persuaded you she was every thing you could have wished, and she proved different to what you expected. I wish that all who become acquainted with the affair would benefit by your experience; for you really deserved less misfortunes than have befallen you, and yet the poor woman is herself miserable, ever since the prosecution commenced against you. She is now sorry for it; Lawyer Rapine deceived her, and she is now become an object of pity and compassion more than of resentment to any one, and you may depend upon this, her sorrows will not be long in this world;—her mind is shook beyond the power of recall, and she is evidently showing strong symptoms of derangement, and I think it appeared clearly so from the first commencement of her prosecution against you.

CHAPTER XX.

A FEW months elapsed since the late great event, that had excited the inhabitants of the village to the utmost bounds of inquiry as to the nature of the whole legal proceeding, by which Ardent became entangled in the crooked wheels of church policy and Machiavelian principles, as founded in ancient times, and still persevered in, to the disgrace of the established religion in this country.

During this suspension of the marvellous, which is of considerable importance to a village ever seeking after the news and anecdote of the hour, expecting a perpetual supply of incidental adventures and rare occurrences; it was during this suspended state of painful existence, that information began to spread of more than usual interest, for another hero now appeared on the scene of triumph and disorderly affections;—no less a personage than the renowned Joseph Patter, or Batter, as he had been frequently styled by his

companions on the village green, where his mother and his grandmother resided. The last story of our hero, Ardent, was fairly worn out, by repeatedly relating it to each other and to every new comer, for it was a story they delighted to talk of; but now fresh reports were in circulation of not an imaginary, as some supposed, but real character, and peculiarly surprising, worthy of Sancho himself, the great counterpart of the Don in ancient renown. The rumour that eased the public suspense (for a dearth of news in a village district is at all times a painful circumstance, and something like a famine to the mind of the curious), was of the following nature:—Ardent having met his old friend, the village poet, they began their conversation, as was usual with them, by our hero observing, “What is it I hear, Mr. Rhymer? that this unfortunate woman is still hurrying herself into perdition in this world, if not in the next? Her man-servant has left her, from the disgrace attached to her service, no longer holding the place as worthy of his acceptance.”

“You say right, Ardent: he has left, and married the maid-servant, intending, by their joint efforts, to keep a public-house.”

“ Who is to succeed him ? ”

“ No one of credit, you may be sure, cares to associate or even live as servant to this once highly prized woman. Formerly, a smile from her was considered the harbinger of happiness ; but the time is altered with her,—she may now pray and entreat to have the society of the meanest.—Joseph, it is said, is her man-servant : his surname is Patter.”

“ What ! that ill-looking fellow on the green, whose grandmother is said to be a witch.”

“ The very same, Ardent : he is young, you know, and any being in the shape of a human form will suffice for extreme depravity.”

“ Why, Rhymer, he has lost four of his front teeth, snuffles through his nose like a pig in a high wind, and his speech resembles an ass’s bray ; he spits and sputters in your face at every word he attempts to speak ; besides which, a yellow fluid distils from his mouth and from its angles ; the same precious gravy trickles down his chin, not very unlike a fop’s mustachios, not from an infusion of the true Virginian tobacco, which some use in the form of a *quid pro quo*, but the really genuine saliva from the putrid gums and

rotten teeth of this gay Lothario; part of which may be indeed suspected to descend from the distillations that accompany another and more elevated feature in its nasal progress. As a waterfall may be said to harmonize with the music of the groves, so, in like manner, may his bagpipe twangs sound in unison to the descending lava from his volcanic mouth."

"The very same Joseph Patter you speak of,—you really have drawn his picture to the life. He is a lover, we must admit, highly qualified for any Arcadian bower you can mention: he is the quintessence of politeness, and his volubility of mutilated sentences, or attempts at words, surpasses all I ever heard; he is unquestionably one of the most delectable of human beings, in an inverse ratio, I ever cast my eyes on. But you know, Ardent, the lady we are speaking of has lived so long a life of voluptuousness, that she, like a coachman worn out, still loves the smack of the whip."

"Or rather say, Mr. Rhymer, like a high-mettled race-horse, greatly prized and invaluable in its prime, and its declining years drags out a miserable existence in a sand-cart or cruel van,

the very dust of which it formerly spurned with disdain, as being unworthy of coming in contact with its hoofs."

"Your resemblance may be too true, Ardent, but there can be now but little doubt that the poor woman is deranged. The first symptoms she showed, in my opinion, was in her prosecution of you, for all your counsel, which, had she taken, she would now have been a respectable woman. Had she but listened to it as a woman of sense, she would have saved both herself and son from absolute ruin ; as it is, I am afraid they are both lost, and will be no longer worthy members of society. As a further proof of her disordered intellects, I think I may mention the taking of this Joseph Patter, a lad, a boy, frightful as he is, to the rosy bed, which makes out our great dramatic writer's words to be true,—'Woman, depraved, will descend from the rosy bed to feed on garbage.' More I cannot say, decency forbids, and will follow Milton's counsel, by drawing a veil round the amorous pair. The lad this morning put his hand into his pocket and pulled out twenty golden guineas, which, he says, she gave him. The people at the public-house, where he showed

his golden fleece, believed them to be counterfeits, but they are really genuine guineas ; I would not have believed it, had I not seen them and chinked them on the publican's table, when, sure enough, they were really guineas of the present currency, besides which she has given him her gold watch."

" I remember the watch well,—it cost fifty guineas ; it is a repeater, and an excellent one it was."

" She has also promised him the title-deeds of her estate, and says, he shall be master of herself, house, and land ; he shows the gifts all over the village, and his indecency of speech surpasses all I ever heard."

" Nothing now surprises me, Mr. Rhymer : she is irrecoverably lost, and she has ruined her intellects by the uncertainty of litigation, and from the malevolence of her temper. Have you as yet heard who the incognito gentleman is who is called her uncle ? for that is still an affair, I expect, involved in mystery : he has hitherto baffled all my penetration,—indeed, is past my finding out."

" No, I have not heard ; but he is supposed to

be a man of large fortune ; but this I learn, he was by no means pleased with her for the prosecution of you, and has deserted her in consequence of her obstinacy, so that she has not one friend left, and I may say with the poet—

“ ‘ When lovely woman stoops to folly,
And finds, too late, that men betray,
What art can soothe her melancholy ?
What dye can wash her sins away ?

“ ‘ The only way her guilt to cover,
And hide her shame from every eye,
To give repentance to her lover,
And wring his bosom—is to die.’

So you see the effects of persisting in folly and wickedness. Had she been prevailed upon by you, she would still have been comparatively a respectable woman, whereas she is now hastening fast into a madhouse, and the next stage will be the grave.”

“ I foresee, Mr. Rhymer, you will be but too true a prophet : I ventured to predict something similar before the commencement of the prosecutions, which angered her very considerably ;

but her resentment against me knew no bounds, and, under existing circumstances, a speedy dissolution might be considered a happy release to her afflictions; for I think, with you, she is unquestionably out of her mind, and now I fear the grave is her only refuge from all human sufferings, for, if she lives, she has gone too far to reclaim or redeem her lost reputation. Who would risk what I have done? I have sustained unheard-of wrongs, in trying to prevent her fall. I pointed out the time to stop, and gave her many forewarnings of her danger; but the remains of her beauty and her fortune were too great temptations for Lawyer Rapine to withstand, and he has sacrificed her to his rapacity and lust, by keeping her from those who would have advised milder conduct, and, by following his baneful counsel, she has annihilated the only chances that remained; for, although a weak and a foolish woman, yet humanity required not that she should be sacrificed in so dreadful and degrading a manner."

The two friends then commiserated and condoled with each other on the loss the village had

sustained in her becoming the instrument of Lawyer Rapine's rapacity and ungentlemanlike conduct: "For, be she now what she may," said they, "the poor had a sincere friend in this hapless helpless woman; once she was the pride of the village, and her praises were in every one's mouth."

CHAPTER XXI.

WE are now rapidly advancing upon the fall of the last-mentioned hero of this history, the renowned Joseph Patter, or Batter, for the manuscript hereabouts was so illegible as scarcely to be discerned, but whether the name was Patter or Batter is not material; but, as every son is presumed to be called after the names of his parents, he must be still considered to derive his name from Patter rather than Batter, as his loquacity would seem to imply.

Mr. Joseph Patter, then, like his great predecessor in the early part of this history, did not make use of his exaltation in quite so discreet a manner as is required by ladies of easy association in general, and, consequently, was doomed to a reverse of fortune, as a subsequent disclosure from the friends of Ardent will abundantly prove; for, like our great first parent of all mankind, he was soon turned out of his fool's Paradise. Affairs were in that state of

dubious uncertainty as indicates revolutions in empires, commotions in villages, and the same in private families.

The information of Joseph Patter's exaltation to the celestial regions, or bower of enchanting influence upon the passions of mankind, accompanied with the locomotive operations of his *lapsus linguæ*, had scarce transpired before something was to be apprehended. It was the tocsin of war sounded by the renowned squire, for such we must now consider him, who was doomed to pick up those spoils after the battle which the generous knight-errant had left for those who came after him—to wit, the remnants of beauty in his lady's possession, which his own absence had left to be claimed by those who came after him; and Joseph was proved to be eventually no Joseph at all, yet his mistress did not deem him worthy of a long continuance of her favours. But this new intelligence, by way of contrast to our hero's own perilous adventures, must be related in the precise manner he acquired the information—through the channel of his friend, the sagacious Mr. Foresight, the astronomer, mathematician, and astrologer, or predictor of events.

He commenced by the inquiry if Ardent had heard the latest rumours of the village.

“ Nothing later, Mr. Foresight, than the advancement of Joseph the chaste, to high favour and fortune at the palace of the enchantress.”

“ Then I have to communicate a curious piece of intelligence, as remarkable as any in the annals of this village. Not to keep you in suspense, learn, then, as a fact, that your old friend, Mrs. Freelove, went to town in the inside of the coach, and Sancho Batter on the outside, as her squire ; for I think it immaterial by which name he is called upon so extraordinary a peregrination or pilgrimage to the holy city, the most chaste in the universe, and certainly, for profligacy, the least exceptionable in the world, as you will readily admit,” said he, laughing.

“ I saw the same phenomenon, Mr. Foresight, of my late friend entering the stage-coach, as a lost and forlorn woman. It made my heart ache to see her, unattended but by her booby of a squire, who ascended the top of the coach : but what of all this ? Such another village, I believe, was never heard of, for every movement of its inhabitants is an incident of consequence, and fraught

with adventure. Had I but the pen of Cervantes, I would describe the occurrences and make others laugh, or at the least smile, at the singular circumstances in our romantic history of this village, amusing, as it is, with the singularity of its inhabitants and ludicrously burlesque stories, as if dictated by the pen of fiction. The pleasantry of satire is the most amusing of all composition, and, frequently, the most instructive; it is the *ne plus ultra* of all effect, for it admonishes by its counsel, and deters by the terror of its example. Happy is the man that can please his neighbour with harmless mirth,—it serves to fill up the blanks of life, and is a useful and fruitful source of happiness; perhaps as profitable to the mind as turning barren wastes into corn-fields is to the body, and far more agreeable than the fable of the giant grinding bones into bread, which is now partly realized at a farm called Golgotha, or the place of skulls; for there you may see the power of machinery reducing the firmest parts of the animal structure once sustaining life, ground to a pulverized state, as to be the nurture, when committed to the earth, for the sustaining plants,

grain, and vegetable life, until it becomes food for man and beast. The man that reduced the science of manufacturing bones into bread through the plough, deserves the loftiest hill in the forest as the base for his monumental statue, which should be at the least as high as Pompey's Pillar; for he that feeds the multitude by industry is preferable to him that destroys them. Excur-sive digression, Mr. Foresight, is the solace of the mind in adversity, the food of poets, and the refreshing verdure of luxuriant corn-fields and bowery woods to the imagination of the historian, who ponders on through the fertile vales of fancy, and climbs the steep and rugged hills of ponderous truth, which are with difficulty ascended, and, when attained, are dangerous to the safety of him who exposes his hard-earned gains to public view: for intellectual acquirements of some description are necessary to be concealed from public observation;—he that exposes them to public notice runs the danger of destroying his peace for life, prosecution, and imprisonment.”

“ My dear friend, you have given me little opportunity, as yet, of informing you of the extra-

ordinary incidents of the village as they have lately transpired, and now solicit your notice and attention."

"I crave your pardon, my good sir, I am all attention; the mind will ramble, the imagination will take its excursive flights, and it requires reason to restrain it within proper bounds. Now, then, I am quite ready for your entertaining information."

"Any one not knowing you as I do, Ardent, would set you down as a pedlar with your wares—make but an inquiry of any kind, and you bring forward a hundred things to divert the attention; and now, as I have listened attentively to your information, it is your turn, in compliment to me, to pay attention to the history of a transaction I am about to submit to your opinion, for we are all lost in conjecture what can have become of Joseph Batter, the chaste."

"Now, friend Foresight, you are amusing me at the expense of my credulity, for, doubtless, the conveyance that placed Joseph in the mighty city has brought or will bring him back again."

"Hear what I have to say, and then judge for yourself and all of us; for the whole village is in

one state of consternation as to what can have become of 'Squire Sancho Batter."

"What is now to be disclosed? is there to be no end of foolery, folly, and madness? No sooner has one dropped the office of knight-errantry than it is immediately resumed by equally as sapient a fool, who has shown the least wisdom of all the host of her former admirers. He will repent the rencontre with a mistress so adroit; he is a champion totally unworthy of her, and she will hurl him to destruction."

"The lady herself is returned from the metropolis," replied Foresight, "without her 'squire, Sancho Batter; what can have become of him? All the inhabitants of this village are lost in conjecture; some say one thing, others the contrary; rumour, with her hundred tongues, has sufficient scope to display her propensities to add rather than to diminish. I suspect she has played him some trick for his loquacity in promulgating her secrets, which, as you know very well by experience, Ardent, should have been considered as hidden mysteries."

"Time will disclose her ingenuity and dexterity, Foresight; they are so matured by long

practice, that nothing now remains to be done but to wait the issue, when all will be made known. Do you not really think, Mr. Foresight, she is deranged? or do all these vagaries proceed from artificial phantasies of her own imagination, creating surprising incidents for the purpose of exciting compassion.”

“ Her whole conduct is so extraordinary, Ardent, that I think the time of her retribution is at hand. It is an axiom with me, that happiness is allotted in equal proportions to all mankind; for those who have wealth, title, and estate, know not how to enjoy it, and knock down those advantages which attend their use by abuse. I reason in this way—Mrs. Freelove in her youthful days gave way to pleasure, and, as few could fascinate more, so few have tasted the sweets of life more extensively than herself: and now comes the wormwood and the gall, which will, in the end, deprive her of reason, and, as far as my observation extends, I think my opinion is correct, the balance of comfort being nearly equal to all mankind, or should be: for those who take pleasure in an inordinate degree, are to expect an inordinate degree of pain and anguish of mind; and

this I have remarked so frequently that it is as a criterion by which I judge of the economy of human life."

"But what account does the lady give of the lost services of her 'squire, Mr. Foresight?"

"She is plausible, it is true, but not believed, Ardent: she says he was tired of her service. Of course you have heard of the nature of that delicate service: by all accounts it must have been a very arduous one, for he has become very thin of late, and, like Rutilio, in Beaumont and Fletcher's play of the Custom of the Country, it is become necessary to turn him to grass; but whether with his consent or without it, is unknown, or whether she has any other serving-man in view, who may prove a more industrious labourer in the vineyard of her delightful Paradise. She says she has obtained another place for him, and that she has given him a character equal to his merits; she does not say where he lives, and, in fact, does not know. All this looks rather suspicious, and as if she had disposed of him by some fair or foul means; but time, and time only, can bring all her schemes to light."

"She is unquestionably an extraordinary woman,

Mr. Foresight ; I used to give myself some credit for detecting imposture, but I find, as far as concerns this woman, I have been a fool in unravelling the human heart and mind ; none but herself can fully disclose the recesses of her machinations. I think she is unravelling the web of her history very fast : daily—nay, hourly, she may be said to make rapid advances down the wheel of fortune, which will, ere long, Mr. Foresight, leave her, as Mr. Rhymer says, in the grave. I think, furthermore, from all inferences, that I may begin to prepare her funeral oration, as being one of the principal characters in this village ; and, as Antony eulogized the dead body of Cæsar, so may I prepare an eulogium for the remains of this unfortunately prepossessing woman—not as her enemy, neither as her friend, but with rigid justice due to society and herself, as one of the most fortunate of the unfortunate ; the rival of married ladies — by seducing their husbands' affections from them, and to single ladies the bane and curse. Should you learn anything further, Mr. Foresight, of Joseph the chaste, I will thank you to let me know."

" Time only can disclose ; but I foretell within

a very short period, perhaps within the short space of only a few days, intelligence will arrive either of the death or captivity of her late 'squire, or of his redemption, or, on the contrary, of his perpetual slavery: this hidden mystery cannot remain long concealed."—And, so saying, the friends parted, each taking different ways.

CHAPTER XXII.

FIVE days rolled over the heads of the villagers, who were in the most anxious state of alarm and apprehension for the lost Joseph; at length, a gazette extraordinary was announced, by the meeting of the three friends in the centre of the village, two of them in quest of the other, to learn if anything relating to Joseph had transpired that morning, more than they had already been informed of.

Mr. Rhymer, the village poet, with the gravity of Nestor himself while delivering an oration to the Greek army before the walls of Troy, first commenced:—"It is expected, my friends, that there will be great rejoicings this day throughout the village, for Joseph, the lost sheep of the fold, is returned to the flock; that bonfires will blaze at night, and at least that an illumination should take place in honour of the event. And, it is further expected, the bells will ring, the boys huzza, the girls laugh, old maids, matrons, and

widows chuckle, grandmothers giggle like girls in their teens ; in fact, the latter has already occurred, for men, women, and children, high and low, rich and poor, have all laughed at the narration of Joseph the great, for he is now become the public talk and the village scandal. It must be admitted that he gives a strange account of his travels, voyages, and captivity."

" You are certainly giving us a bold outline, Mr. Rhymer—travels, voyages, and captivity ! We are surely to give you credit for a poetical effusion this morning."

" You forget, Ardent," said Mr. Foresight, " that nothing is impossible with an enchantress : she is the fairy of the forest, and capable, no doubt, of expediting travels, voyages, and captivity, in an extraordinary and astonishing manner."

" Well, then, I am prepared to be amused by the incidents afforded by the sorceress in so short a space of time ; and no doubt shall exist in my mind but that Joseph may be considered even as a second Columbus, or a discoverer of new worlds to him before unknown."

" Well, then," said Mr. Rhymer, " that you two

gentlemen may not distract yourselves with vain conjectures and idle suppositions about the past, I will relate the occurrence, and then you may judge what credibility is due to me—I merely unfold what was already in the book of fate. Now, then, pay attention, gentlemen, for I came into possession of the information from the words that were spoken by the identical Joseph himself in my hearing, and I am ready to vouch for their authenticity. You have to learn, then, that Joseph, like his namesake in the Scriptures, has been in trouble ; at first he was not believed, but now it is considered to be true, for he offers to swear to the following facts before any magistrate :—That himself and his mistress reached the White Horse Cellar in Piccadilly together ; they then got down, and herself, attended by her Joseph, took a hackney-coach ; both went into it, and rode by the side of each other, like another Thais and Alexander. They reached Wapping together, where she told him to wait at an inn, and then left him ; the inn was less magnificent than the palace of Persepolis in Asia, as you may naturally suppose, but sufficiently large to flatter Joseph's vanity, that the time was near at hand

when he was to be rewarded for all his faithful services. Ten o'clock at night arrived ; Joseph, in anxious suspense, waited with impatience the amorous hour of assignation, when his services would be required of him as her lord chamberlain, for, doubtless, fairy queans are entitled to have lord chamberlains in their sleeping apartments as well as maids of honour, all depending upon the rank and dignity of the party concerned. Joseph, full of expectancy of bliss supreme, rubbed his hands with delight, stroked his chin, felt if his beard was smooth and not stubby, and that his mouth was in proper order for salutation ; for all these trivial concerns are necessary to be observed by the votaries of love and amorous combat. He next examined the state of his heart, which went pit pat, pit pat, and, having his suspicions that his courage wanted a little raising, he took a glass extraordinary, which assisted to elevate his animal spirits to the *ne plus ultra* of human exaltation. It was thus he stood, in expectation of his mistress, at the portals of the doorway, ready prepared for amorous dalliance ; and the amorous Adonis inflated himself in idea that he was a gallant of the first

water, although he might have compared himself to a Tom cat, caterwauling for the mistress of his affections. Still she came not, but at length, as if purposely done to keep him in a state of suspense no longer, lo and behold ! instead of the mistress of his affections alone, came forward a formidable pressgang, knocked Joseph down with one blow, from a heavy bludgeon loaded with lead, and took him without his consent on board of his majesty's ship, the Tender (no very tender usage), his mistress standing by to identify his person. His mistress thus being rid of him, came back to her own house, having, as she thought, silenced him for ever, depending on the tropics to pronounce his funeral oration. But a Superior Being had ordered it otherwise, that Joseph should return, and, like his namesake in the Scriptures, after being confined in durance vile, should be set at liberty. It so happened that Joseph had a considerable part of the twenty golden guineas about him, which he applied so efficaciously, that they released him from his confinement in the hold of the Tender, after having been three days and three nights in the dungeons of despair ; and he has now returned to us on the fifth day from

the time he took his departure from this village. His release was effected by stealth, by what is termed buying off, and he came down to the forest by the first coach, to promulgate his emancipation."

"This affair, Mr. Rhymer, will hasten her ruin,—it is the seal to her crimes; she is proving my predictions to be true, that misery unspeakable will accompany her to the grave. She is a modern Messalina, that may contend for the palm of voluptuousness with the famed Messalina of antiquity, the very bones of whose friends would have made no contemptible pyramid."

"My good friends," said the soft-hearted Rhymer, "it is a pitiable tale of wo and distraction; the poor unfortunate woman has committed herself, it is true, but there is some palliation—her partial distraction; she knew not how to be rid of the man who had offended her, and it was a proof of some returning reason so to act, although in some respects unwarrantably, by a loose profligate fellow, of neither manners, delicacy, nor any other principle, save that of making her known in the most indiscreet and ill-timed manner."

“ I rather think, Mr. Rhymer,” said Ardent, “ it appears more like the suggestion of some artful and crafty person, and she, finding her confidence abused in every pothouse, resorted to the expedient devised by some friend to get rid of the fellow out of the village, who was scandalizing the whole of the parish by his injudicious communications.”

“ Depend upon this, gentlemen, that she is a hapless female, deserving of our pity, and presents a warning beacon to guard the virgin’s heart secure from the dangers of seduction ; for a more melancholy fate than awaits this poor woman need not be recorded.” The friends, having heard the information, separated for the day.

CHAPTER XXIII.

YOUNG Mr. Freelove, unfortunately for his mother and for himself, was a very silly young man; either his articles with his master were expired, or the remainder of his time was presented to him as a favour, it is not known which, but it is supposed the conduct of both mother and son was so flagitious as to be no longer creditable in any individual to have an association or acquaintance with them; and therefore a merit was made of yielding him those services, or that part of his time unexpired which was no longer of value to his employer. He became a resident in the village, and employed himself by blowing a horn, and evincing other indications of an empty-headed coxcomb, not to be controlled nor restrained by his mother's counsel or admonitory precepts. It has been said before, he was always a source of great disquietude to his mother, and it appears to have been an act of retribution that she that had assisted his over-

throw should finally have hers accomplished by him; and so it occurred, for as the mother was depraved, so was the son inconsiderate and thoughtless of consequences, to an unprecedented degree. The retribution of past folly was at hand, and young Mr. Freelove gave such specimens of his disposition and principles, that proved him to be like his unfortunate mother, free from all control or restraint; for, instead of aiming at a right cause, as his former friend Ardent had done, he was the reverse of every thing that had kindness or goodness for the basis of his actions. It reminded Ardent of the fable of the thief and his mother: while the former was going to be hanged, he requested of the sheriff to be permitted to whisper into his mother's ear something of importance before he died; the permission of the sheriff was obtained, and he bit off her ear, as a punishment for neglecting his education in early life. To his other vices intoxication, or deep drinking, was added, and it is most charitable to suppose he then knew not what he said or did, as this chapter will abundantly prove.

It was on one of these senseless and intemperate afternoons, that young Freelove exclaimed,

“ Suppose I have a bastard child by my mother’s servant, what is that to any one ? ” such observation proving, when the liquor is in the head, the judgment is out of it. He now called the pretended maid, who was a new servant, for none respectable would live there after the late fracas.

“ Mary, I say,” bawled the sot, “ come here directly.” The girl came as she was required. “ You shall now and henceforth,” said he, “ be mistress of this house and grounds, and all appertaining thereto.” The girl smiled and sat down; young Hopeful then said, “ I acquired the free use of wine and spirits at the Castle, by associating with the gentlemen of the back stairs, and there I learned to take snuff also; first Prince’s Mixture, then Scotch, and last of all, Irish Blackguard. You must know, girl, that snuff is supposed to be a composition of old coffins and hellebore ground together, and perfume is mixed with it to prevent the noxious exhalations arising from putrid gases or air of a bad quality.”

“ La, sir! how shocking; what, old coffins put up people’s noses? I wonder it doesn’t rot the nose off,” said the girl.

A long dissertation followed on the various

qualities of snuff, as to their use and abuse, which we think proper to omit, and will go on with a song of young Freelove's, as our next elucidation, without venturing to tire the reader's patience with uninteresting dialogue:—

In the midst of my face stands a nose,
The grandest of Dame Nature's works ;
In colour it vies with the rose,
In width far surpasses the Turk's.

Here different hues may be seen ;
The Tyrian, purple, so fine,
With a beautiful tinge of grass-green,
A russet, and flaming carmine.

In the sun it shines brighter than gold,
At a distance looks like a large spark ;
Then it keeps my face free from the cold,
And will light me home well in the dark.

But its beauty would soon fade away,
If with snuff it was not thoroughly cramm'd ;
And myself drunk by night and by day—
There ne'er was such a nose, I'll be d—d.

The young man having finished his song to their mutual satisfaction, now gave out a sentiment that may be comprised in the following acrostic, in the praise of snuff-taking:—

N o useless feature now inspires my lay ;
O, nose ! thy different virtues I revere ;
S nuff magazine, when thou dost lead the way,
E 'en the proud brain must follow in thy rear.

“ It is the grand director of man, Mary,” continued the debauchee, “ in his peregrination through this world of saints and sinners, as well as of human infirmity,—that is, supposing he has a nose left. I will give you a specimen of my observation : an acquaintance of mine found an unusual sensation in his nose, when presently out fell a thimble-full of those ‘precious living creatures which devour the dead, but had, by mischance, or design, began upon my friend while living ; and to show they did not want for sense, got into his head, while his own wit was out—no unusual thing with snuff-takers.”

“ And how came they there, sir ? some of the maggots got out of the old coffins, I dare say. Lord, what poor things we are,—eat others, and are eaten ourselves, and that, too, before we are dead !”

“ You shall hear how it happened, Poll : the person I allude to was a sort of a don in his way, and, like Jack Horner or Paul Pry, thrust his

nose and his fingers into every thing, and having found his nose tumble out maggots faster than was agreeable, he began to reflect how they came there, not suspecting them to have been in his head for a long time, and therefore concluded they might have generated in his snuff-box. What with his own wisdom and that of other people collectively, it was imagined they must have been the representatives of some departed spirits or ghosts long since passed away into putridity and a general mass of corruption, but that the wooden coffin had risen again, and was crumbled into dust for the purpose of being ground and sifted into snuff, which being impregnated with animal putridity, the little creatures began to move about with great agility both in his head and out of it. The microscope determined the point at issue,—that the maggots had first their origin in his snuff-box, for there they moved, full of animal life, like mites in a cheese.”

“ How shocking, indeed, sir ! But is snuff of no use ? ”

“ Yes, Poll ; I believe snuff to be of use to some people—as, to scavengers and nightmen ;

but with me it made this feature as you see (pointing to his nose), red hot; for I was not satisfied until I took a peck of the precious dust, worms, maggots, old coffins, powdered glass, hellebore, devil's bore, and I know not how many bores, pigs, sows, horse-dung, devil's dung, and other excrementitious and extraneous matters, until my nose, as you see, Poll (pointing to it), is become like a stale lobster's claw, so luminous and bright, as to give me light by night, and a torch to melt my sealing-wax with, by day."

"La, sir! what a funny man you are," simpered the wench.

"And then my eyes, Poll, as you see, are so bloodshot and project with drink, that I can scarce see my way, or to read a newspaper at noonday."

While saying this, the young debauchee began to reel about, which the girl observing, said, "Bless me, sir, if you ben't fuddled already."

"Come, Poll," roared he, again, "drink, drink success to the voyage of life, and to those that embark in that vessel called a frigate. You see, Poll, I am half-seas-over already,—I will now blow my horn." Having said this, he left the room, followed by the trulla of his soul and the

distinguished sultana of his affections, who now interposed, by saying, "Don't, Freelove,—you will wake your mother."

"D——n, is not my mother up yet! Then I will flog her out of bed with my hunting-whip; tally ho! tally ho!" With this he went to his mother's room, where he put his threat in execution.

Mrs. Freelove was in bed, and exclaimed, "Oh, pray! oh, pray, oh, pray don't! don't be so cruel, Freelove, my son;—stop, pray stop! Mary, where are you? save me—save me, Mary!" But Freelove still flogged his mother with great severity. "I am ill—indeed, indeed, I am—very ill. Pray, Freelove, forgive me; don't, pray don't! pray, my dear son, forgive me!" Notwithstanding this forcible appeal, he still kept on horsewhipping his mother, she still exclaiming, "I shall not last long! for God's sake, save me! Murder, murder! he will kill me—he will kill me!—murder, murder! This is not the first time you have flogged me in bed! O, you ungrateful son! Murder, murder!" She then became exhausted, and fainted away. Some villagers and neighbours hearing the afflicted mother's cries, rushed into the house, and were

soon in the bedroom, where they found her in a dreadful state, unable to speak, and covered with black and blue marks all over her body. They all exclaimed, "What is the matter? poor Mrs. Freelove all over weals, with nothing on but her chemise! fetch the hartshorn—she is dead! No, she breathes; bathe her temples—apply hartshorn to her nose." After some minutes' assiduity, they restored her to speech, by their kindness and attentions. They then began upon the son, pushed him out of the room, saying, "She was always good to you," and cried shame of him; some of them even striking him. The hardened villain, or the unnatural son, went away cursing and swearing, smacking his horsewhip, exclaiming as he went, "Tally ho! tally ho! the fox is in cover," with other language equally brutal. Some of the neighbours stayed the night with her, not daring to leave her to her merciless and thoughtless son. The unfortunate woman craved their protection in the following manner:—

"I am by no means well, my kind neighbours; pray stop with me; indeed, I shan't live long." In the course of that night she made use of these words,—“ I find, now it is too late, I lost a

friend, indeed; I prosecuted Mr. Ardent unjustly for his kind counsel to me. O, had I but followed his advice, instead of bad advisers, I had now been a prosperous woman. Poor fellow, what he must have suffered! It is now too late to make him a reparation; I hope he will forgive me; pray tell him, kind neighbours, what I say. I know he will pity me,—he always had a kind heart; and I understand he is now as unhappy as I am. Pray say I am sorry, and I hope he will forgive me for all my unkindnesses towards him.”

In this way she passed the night, lamenting the error of having prosecuted Ardent, and pitied by all classes of people; for, now she was become an object of compassion and humanity, they occasionally sympathized with her; for, whatever were her misdeeds, the brutal treatment of the son, and his want of kindness, was completely unjustifiable;—all took up the mother’s cause against him.

Time passed on in this way for some few months, when a change took place in the village, as will be related in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ARDENT felt an objection to remaining in a village so fraught with calamity and unhappy incidents, which had of late so crowded upon him as nearly to bereave him of the portion of sense he had left. Although he could not actively take a part in the poor woman's sorrows, yet he felt for her all the pangs of real distress : her late contrition before many witnesses soothed his angry mind ; vindictiveness, or more properly speaking, all retaliation, on his part, ceased from the moment she became an object of pity and commiseration. She had repented, relented, and made reparation to the utmost of her ability ; could she do more ? as she was now evidently dying, and the lucid intervals of reason confirmed our hero, and all who once knew her, that she had become quite a changed woman. Her repentance, though late, was sincere ; her former transgressions were forgotten ; and Ardent, who had most cause to be angry, was the first to yield

his condolence. His own peace of mind was shook; the insult offered to his understanding, his reason, his good sense, and every sound principle of right conduct, had now changed its object of attack. It was no longer the deluded woman, aided by a crafty lawyer, with wealth at command to compete with. She had ceased to be his opponent, had confessed her error, was sorry to have occasioned him inconvenience, and no more could she say or do. She had no further acquaintance with Lawyer Rapine; his counsel was considered pernicious, the iniquity of his conduct now stared her in the face; the son, from weakness of mind or bad passions, was the reverse of a comforter—all went on wrong, and she was fast verging towards the grave.

The principle that Ardent set out upon was established; he had no more enemies to oppose, his mind reverberated upon itself, and his inquiry now was, upon what principle of right or wrong conduct he had become the victim of the higher powers? A simple village quarrel to embroil him, as it had done, with the government, or those acting immediately under its authority.

To war with empire was now his ambition; to

tilt with the wrong principles of the world was his glory, his delight ; to detect error and expose it, with the view to benefit all classes of the people, was now his soul's aim. The ardour of enterprise was again renewed within his veins, and his blood boiled to return the foul blow he had received from a sinister quarter, where he least expected it,—from the very church, or champions of the church, for whom he had contended with so much zeal, and through whom he had nearly lost the balance of his own reason. It was too bad thus to be attacked as it were by ambuscade, from the bushes of papal tyranny and usurpation over the ignorances of mankind. It was foul work, and still fouler play ; it was wounding their ally in a sensitive and sensible quarter ; it was exposing him to ridicule—to contempt—to scorn—to be sneered at—grinned at—laughed at—chuckled at—quizzed at—pointed at ; the finger was raised. “ That was the man who stood in a white sheet,” said one : perhaps misinformed by another, or from the natural disposition of one man to break down the spirits of another, to humble him, to drive him to despair and madness ; to excite him to acts of violence towards himself

or others. This was the mercy extended to our hero for speaking the truth, from England's most Christian church, the reformed Protestants as they are termed. But he respects them for all the good actions they produce, and when they are in error they deserve the lash of satire and the scourge, until they relent and repent the errors of their ways. Where there are many children, they should have equal lenity and mercy shown them, and, above all things, be encouraged to speak the truth, and shame the devil, and when they do not, punished. Grown children, too, like principalities and kingdoms, should be equally amenable to the rod of castigation, the scourge of satire, or the lampoon of ridicule.

To set up as a wit required a large stock of ideas; to establish himself as a reformist required a considerable intercourse with mankind; to form a judgment of propriety as to what is right and what is wrong, required an extensive knowledge of many branches of literature; above all, to acquire a style intelligible to the generality of readers, was perhaps as difficult of attaining as any of the former, or perhaps all combined. At all events, preparations must be made, the science of

mankind must be known and well understood; greater intercourse with society was necessary than could be procured or obtained in a village. The mind became restless, it reverberated and recoiled upon itself; it was a powerful spring retained within an inadequate field of action; its activity wanted to be excited, to be striving with the bold, contending with the ambitious, and, above all, to investigate truth and natural causes. Truth being the basis and centre-pin of all the operations of Ardent's mind, he prepared himself for fresh enterprises, fresh contentions, different scenes,—to conquer or fall by those opposing obstacles that either make, ruin, or confound the generality of mankind embarked in the same schemes,—that of conquering difficulties, or be subdued in turn by them. Such was the state of our hero's mind, restless as a high-spirited race-horse, ready to run the course of destiny, and overthrow, or attempt it, every thing that came within his way not consistent with sound reason, principle, and good conduct.

That he lamented the catastrophe befallen his late friend and mistress more than any other individual, or even her own son, was most con-

spicuously apparent; that she did not attend to his sound reasoning was the rock on which she split. His mind might have been somewhat blinded, but excess of immoral pleasure none could patronize or uphold. He was not what is termed a saint, but a man of the world, with moderate pretensions to good sense, honest integrity, and upright principle. It was no longer an individual he sought to reclaim,—it was the world generally; no sooner did he see anything wrong, than he tried to set it right; the world moving as frequently in opposite directions, cross purposes was the natural consequence, and many overthrows our hero had; but still his mind was buoyant;—like a buoy in the ocean, he stood the buffeting of many a hard gale of public opinion, and was lashed by the waves of disorderly passions until he rebounded again and again, as if elastic, and incapable of being subdued; for his rock was principle, from which he could not be removed, and competed manfully with all opposers, one after the other, by the general soundness of his principles, which stood the shocks of criticism, the malversations of the malevolent, the misrepresen-

tations of the envious, the selfish, and the interested.

Thus far is inserted as a preliminary, to account in part for the alteration in our hero's opinion of the necessity there was for a change of residence; quietness prevailed too much, his mind was shattered by the recent conflict he had undergone; he required a fresh scene and scope to move in, new objects and a diversity of thought to withdraw him from himself,—in fact, to become a new man; not to fall into such an error in future, of attempting a second time to reclaim a vicious woman.

The resolution being fixed, an opportunity soon presented itself of a medical gentleman treating with him for his practice, which was eventually made over to him. He was partly influenced to this step by the various reports he heard daily and hourly of the sufferings of Mrs. Freelove, and the ill conduct of her son, which was so shocking to his humanity, that it made him miserable to hear it. He would say, “ I fear all the reports I hear are too true; the retributive justice of the Almighty is at hand, and she has yet

to undergo great calamities before a final period is put to her sufferings by death. I am about to leave the village with my peace of mind destroyed, and seek by change that peace I fear is for ever lost; not so much on this poor woman's account now, as on my own. I see things quite in a different light to what I did; we have both been the tools, or rather victims, of the higher classes of society, and have fallen into their snares and traps, to prevent a disclosure of their immorality. Compared to them, she is still an innocent woman; for, doubtless, it will soon be made known that her first seduction was by rank, fortune, or influence, and against them be my resentment hurled, as against a guilty world. And was I to draw a comparative estimate of the component parts of this world, I would say it is compounded of folly, vice, knavery, madness, and all the intermediate stages of those continental vices which was its overthrow: here a monument of folly, there a bower of love; then, again, a gulf of knavery, and an ocean of madness and indiscretion on the part of the government, the church, and the people. Such is human life as it dances through the mazes of existence in this sublunary

world. Her medical attendant says she is deranged, and shortly to be removed to a mad-house. I cannot passively look on and see the wreck of the poor woman I once loved; I endeavour to think of her in that amiable simplicity I had once fancied her to possess. I must see her yet once again before she dies, mad as she is now become, to take my final leave of her; of one that I once thought most lovely, amiable, virtuous, and almost divine. She then influenced me by her magic charms and Paphian bowers, inexpressible graces, and other incentives to an extravagant love and ardent attachment. But she can please no more on earth; her house is now her living tomb, containing all that was once lovely and desirable in her lover's eyes; but now no longer so. It was necessary that I should be punished: such was the will of fate and the decrees of Divine Providence, for what purpose I have yet to learn; perhaps as an example of the passion of infatuation to all posterity. As to mistaking her principles, that was my fault, and my ignorance of life may be attributed to the study of the good character only, abhorring the pernicious one as beneath my regard. Not so the lawyers: they

contemplate the bad in every action of life, and believe no man or woman just, equitable, or fair in their conduct, but when compelled to be so by bonds, proving human nature is under restraint, and the bonds and fetters of the mind are not the only ones existing in a civilized state of society. All is shackle, all restraint, and very properly so; for, since man is imperfect and inconstant, security must be had, and the depraved prevented from making a prey and a wreck of society, as in my case. The perversion of human reason is apparent,—there is a mystery yet to be unfolded of who she is and what she is, whether wife or widow; for it is as yet a secret undisclosed. The *incognito* is unknown, the phantom of the forest is seen no more, a magic spell restricts him from the bower of bliss; the Idalian groves sigh for him in vain,—he comes not, neither is he any longer seen in this village, or within the region of the forest. She is said to be insane: I will ascertain that fact before I leave the village; for if such is the truth, it will in part account for her resentment against me. Her delusions have been so various, so numerous, and unprecedented, that it requires a person well acquainted with her

in her former life, to detect the imposture, if there is any. If she is really deranged, she is an object of pity and compassion, and I will excite the sympathy of the village in her favour; she shall not be the most abhorred of all women; resentment has its limits, and when that ceases humanity commences. It can no longer excite a suspicion that I am influenced by an unlawful passion, amounting to crime in the eyes of the law, and the bane of civil society, by an immoral intercourse with a voluptuous woman. That it may be imprudent in the extreme, must be admitted, particularly while her son, now a man grown, is a resident in the house. But that signifies little: my personal risk is nothing, when compared to the tranquillity of mind to be derived from once again beholding the woman who influenced and infatuated me, although to great indiscretion, proving that woman's charms are hard to be resisted, and when virtuous, never. The difficulty of seeing her, was I to call, would be great," said Ardent, "and none but an ardent character would risk the mortification of being refused admittance, or insulted by the son or servant. My pretence for calling," continued

our hero, “must be to claim borrowed money from the young man, who has never had sufficient recollection to pay those loans, so improperly appropriated at the time. This will pose him, and should I not see him, my being about to leave the village, the scene of our former halcyon days, will plead my extenuation with the mother, and justify my calling, as a mutual proof of forgiveness of injuries on both sides; for she has proclaimed to the world she was in an error in prosecuting me. So I will, with the same candour, soothe the decline of her life, at least with sympathy, and no longer consider her as worthy of detestation, for she is surely now a harmless woman, and vengeance is not necessary to be extended to the grave. I will, if possible, ameliorate the will of fate by a timely concession, and show that she is no longer to be dreaded, but is now become the harmless individual she once represented herself to be. To prevent personal insult and affront, I must go armed with a cudgel, to knock down the man who dares to assault me, for I will receive no blow with impunity from any man.”

It was by such reasoning Ardent prepared him-

self again to risk an interview with the syren of his former regard, to take his leave of her before he retired from the forest, which act can never be justified by the rules of propriety, but may be reconcileable to the rules of principle, having humanity for its base and the Christian charities for examples, as that of "forgive your enemies." He was no longer ambitious of throwing down the gauntlet of disputation: the prize contended for had been yielded him,—that right principle was preferable to wrong. He had, in fact, conquered, and he now extended his friendly hand to his prostrate foe and the enemy to the peace of multitudes. Other and more important services now demanded his attention: he was, as it were, impelled onwards to seek new principles to elucidate and exemplify to the world that the man of honour was the safest character, and that rascality and knavery usually meet with their reward either from God, their countrymen, or both. It was in quest of further adventures he was now embarking again on the wide world, to brave the stormy elements of disordered passions, and a contention with opposite principles to his own in their secret and strong holds of corruption, not those of volup-

tuousness, but of knavery, imposition, and deceit in his own sex. The battles of truth he had still to fight, falsehood to vanquish, crafty treachery to expose, and remove from them for ever the masks of virtue. So that he was now to be looked upon as a zealot in the cause of religion and those bold truths which fix the foundations of society upon an imperishable foundation, as those of the Ten Commandments of God. In the madness of his zeal to reform the world, he fancied himself sounding the horns of Jericho from the walls of Jerusalem, and other extravagancies not necessary here to mention. His pen he fancied to be a javelin of the brightest steel, with which he could drive, with the impetus of a valiant man, through the armour of infidelity, and pierce the corslets and crosiers of hypocrisy, together with the coats of mail belonging to the less valorous artificers of human ingenuity and deception. His metaphorical language was proverbial. But we must return to the actual state of things he was then engaged in.

“It is to be my final leave, my last adieu,” said he, “for it will be the last time of seeing her in this life, and I have to prepare for more

renowned conflicts than to battle with womankind. Shame on me for such a weakness and jealousy ! but errors of all descriptions must now engage my attention, not in morals alone, but the fallacies in civil life shall be now my aim to vanquish, or fail in the attempt."

He fancied he was a reformer of the modern school, and had discovered a new path to glory and fame ; the way was difficult, yet he did not despair : with a good cause on his side, he was prepared for conflict, and to defend his conceived notions of propriety to the utmost peril and jeopardy of his own fortunes. He was, for the last time, about to approach the magic castle of enchantment, for so he had formerly considered it while visiting his infatuating divinity. Like another Hercules, with his club he was resolved to attack the Cerberus, should it be necessary, who guarded the gates of this modern hell, for every bower of improper association may be so called, without outraging the rules of propriety or the modern acceptation of that word in society. With a Ulyssean policy he contrived his plan of entrance into the den of the lioness, as it was said to be by the worthy and Reverend Dr. All-

worthy when residing in the village. For his address when therein, and his retreat therefrom, he left to chance, the fates, and the providences of life; for his safety he secured the most ponderous cudgel within his reach, and thus armed, he prepared himself for the rencounter he had an undoubted right to expect, for he wished to meet the son, to give him admonitory counsel respecting his treatment of his mother, which was brutal in the extreme. Having done this, he felt he should have done his duty to society, and might then leave the village without, perhaps, so much to regret, and only lamenting that they had ever met, or that they had not been more discreet on both sides. The axiom of "merry and wise" was not their forte; they were indiscreet, and felt the consequences of their indiscretion.

We will close this chapter with relating the fable of the Eagle and the Beetle, and as our readers, perhaps, have not the fable at hand, it is now inserted for their perusal.

THE EAGLE AND THE BEETLE.

"A hare that was hard put to it by an eagle, took sanctuary in a ditch with a beetle; the

beetle interceded for the hare ; the eagle kept off the former, and devoured the other. The beetle took this as an affront to hospitality as well as to herself, and so meditated a revenge, watched the eagle up to her nest, followed her, and took her time, when the eagle was abroad, and so made a shift to roll out the eggs and destroy the brood. The eagle, upon this disappointment, timbered a great deal higher next time ; the beetle watched her still, and showed her the same trick once again, whereupon the eagle made her appeal to Jupiter, who gave her leave to lay her next course of eggs in his own lap ; but the beetle found out a way to make Jupiter rise from his throne, and so, upon the loosening his mantle, the eggs fell from him at unawares, and the eagle was a third time defeated. Jupiter stomached the indignity, but upon hearing the cause, he found the eagle to be the aggressor, and so acquitted the beetle."

The application to our history has some allusion, and is therefore inserted.

"THE MORAL.—It is not for a generous prince to countenance oppression and injustice, even in his most darling favourites."

One more.—Æsop, the great fabulist, and many

other learned men, have been sacrificed for speaking the truth, so disagreeable to those who call themselves great men; and so they may be in their own conceit, as were the seven wise men of Greece, when they sacrificed Æsop for detecting their blunders, by throwing him off a very high rock, and thus dashed his brains out.

It arose in the following manner :—

When Æsop had taken almost the whole tour of Greece, he went to Delphos, either for the oracle's sake, or for the sake of the wise men that frequented that place. But when he came thither, he found matters to be quite otherwise than he expected, and so far from deserving the reputation they had in the world for piety and wisdom, that he found them proud and avaricious, and hereupon he delivered his opinion of them under this fable.

“ I find,” says he, “ the curiosity that brought me hither to be much the case with people at the sea-side, that see something come hulling towards them a great way off at sea, and take it at first to be some great mighty matter, but upon driving nearer and nearer the shore, it proves at last to be only a heap of weeds and rubbish.”

CHAPTER XXV.

Lais, the courtesan, said of philosophers in ancient time, she did not know that she had fewer philosophers visit her than other men. “ So, a truce,” said Ardent, “ with the *pro’s et contra’s* on visiting this woman once again,” as was said in the last chapter ; for he had prepared himself with a stout oak walking-stick to save himself from an assault, and thus armed he again made his entrance into the Paphian bower, or fairy regions of the enchantress. He knocked as formerly at the hall-door for admittance—by no means a thunderer, for it was no longer thundering times, but a modest knock of tender recognition, not caring to call down attention or observation from any one. The lady saw the advance of her former lover through the parlour window, and immediately, without the least hesitation, advanced to meet him with all the goodwill of their former previous acquaintance ; for nature will be nature when unsophisticated by man,

through the artifice of design, the frauds of ambition, or the lust of avarice.

It was now the lovers met for the last time after a long absence, each having sustained a variety of misfortunes, unprecedented in the annals of modern romance. The lady truly appeared a picturesque character, her hair straggling in loose tresses over her shoulders, like another Ophelia, and Ardent at that moment considered himself as another Hamlet; for such was still her witchery over his imagination, and long habit of associating the sublimity of the passion of love with his early habits of thinking in her favour. Each of their sorrows had been of an indescribable character, not to be given utterance to by the pen; for they had both been enslaved by the same wand, the wand of passion, that great enslaver of all hearts in all conditions of life, from the throne to the cottage; the soother of our joys and the ameliorator of sorrows, when virtue forms the basis of the union in married and respectable life. The lovers met, recognized each other,—it was for the last time, and for ever.

“I have called to take my leave of you,” said Ardent, as he shook her by the hand in the marble

hall, as they then stood on its tessellated pavement. She suffered him to lead her by the hand to the front parlour, or dining-room ; he then again informed her that he was about to leave the village, and that it was the last visit he should ever have it in his power to make her.

“ I am very sorry, I am very sorry,” said she.

“ How very altered you are become,” observed Ardent : “ you appear to be only the shadow of your former self ; those horrid blisters and other means have reduced you very much ; your hair hangs about your shoulders in disorder, that makes you resemble Shakspeare’s Ophelia. Do you know me ?” inquired Ardent, gazing on her with a look of compassion.

“ Yes, I do ; is not your name Mr. Ardent ?”

“ Yes, I am Ardent, and am truly sorry to see you in such a state of unhappiness.”

“ I am very sorry, Mr. Ardent, I am very sorry ; I hope you forgive me.”

“ Indeed I do, from my heart ; you have been very ill-advised.”

“ You see me altered, Mr. Ardent ; my eyes are dim, I can scarcely see you ; those eyes you used to call pretty are now almost blind, and my vivacity will soon be laid in the dust.”

“ You affect me, Mrs. Freelove, beyond all expression ; the hand of the Almighty appears in this calamity, but you must pray for forgiveness and be resigned to his will.”

“ I am very sorry, I am very sorry,” reiterated the unhappy woman.

“ In your intervals of reason,” resumed Ardent, think of heaven, of a future and a better world ; all is disappointment and vexation here ; your pilgrimage, which will now be short, is possibly to be envied by those who have still to contend with this world’s difficulties and crimes. Address yourself to God for forgiveness of errors incident to human nature ; you have no time to lose, be now serious, and not reject the offered mercy of God through repentance.”

“ You were my friend, Mr. Ardent, my most sincere friend ; your friendly counsel shall not now be lost or misapplied. I will, I do repent ; I am very sorry—indeed I am, very sorry—I ever persecuted you, Mr. Ardent ; you were my only friend.”

“ Let your thoughts,” said Ardent, “ be now, day and night, on Heaven’s mercy and forgiveness. Let this kiss be as a token of my recon-

ciliation ; I have no longer any animosity against you, and, as I see you are very exhausted, I will now take my leave—farewell !”

It was thus the lovers parted, each taking leave of the other with every demonstration the nature of the interview admitted. It was but a short conversation, but it seemed to tranquillize both their minds ; and they were neither of them the worse for this last interview that ever took place between them.

Upon Ardent’s leaving the mother, he was met by her son. Their surprise was equal, for Ardent expected at least to have reached the outward door of the house before Freelove was apprised of his presence in conversation with his mother. Upon seeing Ardent, he fell back in a paroxysm of rage, and exclaimed, “ You here ? You here ? I am all amazement ; your assurance and impudence are unbearable.—What ! brave me thus in my own house, and to my face ?”

“ Yes, braggart, I brave you thus, and face the tiger in his den ; having dared you to do your worst while I took leave of your mother.”

“ I wish,” said the brute, “ I had some weapon in my hand—I would fell you to the earth.”

“ I came not to see you, sir, but your mother, whom your own folly, assisted by Lawyer Rapine, has destroyed—a Rapine he has been to you and your mother ; but I came not to recriminate. As I am about to leave the village, I called upon your mother for the last time and for ever, to convince her I bear no malice, and, having done so, I have no further business here ; therefore, if you please, sir, I will leave it peaceably, quietly, and, I hope, tranquilly.”

“ Had I anything in my hand, I would knock you down with it,” again vociferated young Freelove.

“ I came prepared for you, sir, as you perceive,” replied Ardent, showing him his oak walking-stick, of no small dimensions ; “ but, as I have no business here now, I leave you, and hope I may never hear again of such gross outrage offered by yourself to your poor insane mother.”

Ardent then left the house by the same doorway through which he had been admitted by the mother of the young man—the one disputing his way out, and the young man hectoring with all the violence of a mastiff. Luckily, no inconvenience resulted to either party. Many blamed

Ardent for his temerity, and others again considered it no more than allowable, as there had never been so much animosity between the individuals as between those whose interest it was to promote the feud for interested purposes.

Thus ended this famous quarrel—the consequences in after-life to our hero were very serious, those to the lady herself will be related in the subsequent pages.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE fable of a lion and bear falling out, as related in Æsop's Fables, somewhat applies to the foregoing history, and, as the fable is not very long, I will transcribe it for the reader.

“ There was a lion and a bear had gotten a fawn betwixt them, and there were they at tooth and nail which of the two should carry it off; they fought it out, until they were even glad to lie down and take breath. In which instant a fox, passing that way and finding how the case stood with the two combatants, seized upon the fawn for his own use, and so very fairly scampered away with him. The lion and the bear saw the whole transaction, but, not being in a condition to hinder it, they passed this reflection upon the whole matter—here we have been worrying of one another, who should have the booty, till the cursed fox has robbed us both of it.

“ The Moral.—’Tis the fate of all Gotham

quarrels, when fools go together by the ears, to have knaves run away with the stakes."

The mind of our hero was, comparatively speaking, at rest; he had seen the deluded woman, conversed with her, and they had ceased to consider each other in any light than former friends, and no longer enemies to a mutual peace.

He prepared to leave the village by calling upon the Reverend Mr. Aimwell and others, to thank them for their kindness and countenance in protecting him through the suit. The conversation that passed between the reverend clergyman and our hero we will now relate, that no evidence may be lost of this being a true and faithful narrative of transactions now long since passed away.

Upon arriving at the parsonage, or house occupied by the clergyman of the parish, he was introduced to the reverend divine, and commenced by saying—"I have called to take my leave of you, reverend sir, and to return you my sincere thanks for your friendly co-operation through my arduous difficulties and distress of mind. Had it not been for your friendly counsel and that of some other friends, in all probability

I must have sunk under the extraordinary calamities that befell me, which, to an individual, is almost unprecedented. To your virtue and firmness in the cause of religion, reverend sir, is to be attributed the comparatively happy termination."

"As to your unfortunate neighbour, Mr. Ardent, the Almighty seems to have selected her as an example to intimidate the wicked, and as a warning to the thoughtless and indiscreet female, in whatever rank of society she may move, to keep her steady in the path of duty, virtue, and religion, in which practice only is to be found true honour and happiness in this life, for all else is vanity, wretchedness, and deceit, as well as misery indescribable. Are you then going to leave the village, Mr. Ardent? what is the cause?"

"You are no stranger, sir, to the unhappiness I have undergone for the last three years; and I am now about to leave the village for the recovery of that peace of mind I have so long lost, and for the further study of my profession in the metropolis."

"Had you not better continue where you

are, Mr. Ardent? your disquietude would cease with time."

"You are very friendly, sir,—I shall leave you and my other friends with regret; I wish I could comply, but my harassed faculties require repose. A change of scene, I flatter myself, will be useful to restore me to that health of mind which is as necessary for me as health of body; the former I have lost, the latter only continues with me, and the shock of adversity has hitherto, thank God, been unable to impair it."

"Under such circumstances, Ardent, I wish you every success in life, and I hope you will be careful how you attempt to reform the vicious character again. I recommend it for your consideration and comfort not to be a misanthrope; think favourably of human nature; all are not Mrs. Freeloves,—there are some very amiable characters in life, and worthy of our best affections and solicitude."

"Your counsel, reverend sir, partakes of that benevolence you so extensively practise; you are a worthy minister of the church, the true pastor of your flock, and in your family you diffuse around

those blessings which constitute true happiness ; in being the servant of God, you are the friend of man. I have now only to ask, reverend sir, that you will be equally as solicitous for the interest of my successor as you have been for mine.”

“ I will take care of the interest of your successor, Ardent,—in you he has an advocate that will be attended to ; and, since we cannot prevail upon you to continue among us, we will attend to your recommendation.”

“ You have conferred upon me, sir, lasting obligations, which I can never forget or repay. The civilities and kindness I have experienced from yourself and the Reverend Dr. Allworthy, are remembered with gratitude, which can never be effaced from my memory while life lasts ; and the most painful circumstance of my leaving is, that I shall be removed to a distance from my best friends. My mind is torn into distraction, perturbation, and innumerable griefs, which I will not afflict you, reverend sir, with enumerating. The disquietudes I undergo are of a singular character, as if portending great events, and that there are other characters engraved on the human heart which I have to investigate.

My information being inconsiderable, my mind is as blank paper or a tablet, on which I record my facts for future use, to be investigated, scrutinized, and digested, into order, form, and all the routine of collected intellectual acquirements. The heart and mind of man is my study, my delight to contemplate and compare—I live but to learn.”

“Judicious conceptions, Mr. Ardent.”

“All this crowd of collected ideas, acquired by experience, are but so many stimulants to urge me forward to acquire fresh information in those regions called the science of mind, which I have have not as yet explored. This restless activity and ardour of enterprise in quest of new adventures, is the consequence of deviating from the prescribed wishes of my father, and, from following my own inclinations, suffering myself to be duped by a pretence of marriage with a woman as yet unknown. The mysterious incognito, or unknown, is still the individual he always was, and remains concealed,—no longer, perhaps, the phantom of the heath, but the *ignis fatuus* of another hemisphere. Whoever he is, I fancy I am indebted, directly or indirectly, to him for

my discomfitures ; he is, I suspect, the grand moving spring of the whole arcanum. The masquer is impenetrable, he is still involved in mystery ; what the fabled genii were in former days, he is in the present times—a giant, under the disguise of masks, assuming such varied forms that he may be said to be a will-o'-the-wisp, and, ere he is found out, eludes pursuit by flight, so that but a very imperfect and indistinct notion can be entertained of him, of who he is, what he is, where he came from, whence he goes, or when he returns. The woman was too amiable to be entirely vicious, and too depraved to be a good woman—such is human nature in her deformity of principles ; and such must be my task, at a future period of my life, to make known, for the benefit of others, how they deviate from parental instructions to run after individuals who have no character to lose, or, if they have virtues, they are counterpoised. My best affections, like a merchant's cargo, are split upon a rock—the rock of artifice or vice, placed here, as it seems, by the great unknown or phantom before alluded to, decoying the passing stranger or the most intimate of her friends, by deluding promises, to his destruction.

I now go to collect the wreck of my lost principles and remaining virtues."

"I wish you every success, Ardent; again I say, think well of womankind, for all are not Mrs. Freeloves."

The friends parted, each wishing the other every happiness that can attend laudable exertion and fruitful enterprise.

CHAPTER XXVII.

OUR hero now left the forest, to renew his studies and endeavour to restore his heart and mind to its former serenity ; for, like a vessel that had braved tempestuous seas and hurricanes, so had he stemmed the torrent of disordered passions, and glad was he to get into port, or at least away from the pelting storm and waves of angry feelings. In the calm of philosophy, and again studying medical science, he prepared himself for future combat with gladiatorial energy, and sowed the seeds of that information which was to have benefitted his future life.

It was after six months spent in hard study, he braced his nerves and endeavoured to give a certain tone of manly feeling to his mind, which had been somewhat warped by soft illusions and seductive blandishments. With a calm, collected, and steady mind, our hero once more re-visited the forest, to learn every particular relating to the unhappy lady, who he had left six months pre-

vious, in a very precarious state of health both, in body and mind. The information he obtained was considerable ; he learned that, much to the credit of his friends, they had done all they could to tranquillize her mind, in her disordered state of aberration and disquietude.

The Nestorean Rhymer was the principal character in the drama in the absence of our hero ; and, as Ardent was anxious to learn all particulars that had taken place in his absence, he again renewed his intimacy with his old friend and acquaintance, the aforesaid village poet, who was truly the Nestor of the village. Mutual congratulation soon evinced the good feeling that subsisted between the two friends, each commiserating the late unhappy state of the victim of depravity, which had been extremely distressing to some individuals who were her sincere friends and well-wishers."

The Nestorean philosopher then commenced his information on the particulars connected with the history of the unhappy lady ; at the same time presenting a true picture of human wretchedness, which the lost and forlorn Mrs. Freelove was obliged to undergo in her reverse of fortune, and

after the decay of those charms that had heretofore prepossessed all that beheld them. The Nestor of the village then began: "Ah! my good friend, Ardent, it is now some time since we had the pleasure of seeing each other; our walks round the royal park were as conducive to the improvement of our minds by conversation, as they were to the health of our bodies by exercise. Yourself not being an unread man, and myself having experience in the ways of a seductive world, exchanged sentiments and opinions with mutual satisfaction; so true is the proverb, 'That nothing relieves the distress of the mind like a true friend.'"

"Very true, Mr. Rhymer: I often look back to some past scenes with regret, and to others with real satisfaction."

"Mrs. Freelove," said Rhymer, "will torment you no more on earth by law-suits and litigations; poor unfortunate woman, she has fallen a victim to her own vice and immorality. I have a tale to unfold, Mr. Ardent, that will make your heart ache; for you were always sensibly alive to the distress of others, but particularly of this lady, the author of her own and your calamities."

“ Ah ! Mr. Rhymer, and is Mrs. Freelove no more on earth ? It is only the short space of a few months since I last conversed with her previous to my leaving the forest, to quiet my mind after the agitations of the past, and now all is over—unfortunate being ! I once thought her all that was pleasing in woman, but lastly, all that was vicious, for so truth obliges me to confess. She is, then, really dead ?—Alas ! she was a voluptuous, pleasing, prepossessing woman, when first we were acquainted ; she was then only thirty-seven years of age, and looked, as I fancied, about twenty-seven ; for such was my infatuation that it blinded her imperfections from my sight, until they became too glaring for my peace, and could no longer be endured by my reasoning faculties. I saw too plainly the precipice before her, and forewarned her of her danger ; she took offence at such freedom, and now, poor unfortunate woman, she has fallen down the destructive chasm, and the grave contains all that was once lovely in my estimation. Such is the folly and perversity of human nature, sporting with existence on the brink of a precipice, when one false step precipitates them into eternity.”

“ It is true, Ardent, when you left us, she was very bad, but her decline became rapid from that time, and her deranged faculties, instead of being melancholy, became violent. She called on your name almost incessantly—said she was very sorry, very sorry, and this she incessantly repeated till her death. It became necessary to confine her, and myself being the only friend she had left, placed her under the care of Dr. S——, in London, at two guineas a week; but he could do her no service, and her son, with Mary, the servant, took her out of his care and management without my knowledge; and, unknown to me, removed her to an obscure lodging near Richmond, where they confined her on a bed of straw, in the most barbarous manner, in an outhouse, although it was the depth of winter, with her hands and legs tied to the bedstead. These inhuman and unfeeling creatures had nearly starved her to death, and would have accomplished their object, had not the servants of a lady, whose premises joined, fancied they heard some groans, and, upon looking through the crack of a shed, beheld the poor creature, extended and confined in almost a state of nudity,

labouring under the greatest degree of suffering human nature is capable of. The servants informed their mistress of the barbarous treatment some unfortunate person was undergoing ; the lady, with the greatest difficulty, got into the house, and, having stated the motives of her visit upon the principles of Christian charity, the maid, Mary, with a child at her breast, denied any such person being there, and even all knowledge of any such individual in distress. The lady's suspicions being excited of unfair treatment, she was determined not to be baffled, but, placing money in the girl's hand, she came to a discovery of the truth. The secret being extracted from the servant with reluctance, in the absence of young Frelove, nothing remained to be done but for the lady to discover the hapless creature's friends, which, after a time, she succeeded in, and wrote to me instantly upon the subject."

" Good God ! Mr. Rhymer," exclaimed Ardent, " what a tale ! it makes my blood boil within me ; I can scarce believe you were credibly informed."

" It is too true, Ardent, as you will find by the sequel. Immediately, upon the receipt of the letter, I took post-chaise, went to the house, was

denied admittance, but, by threats of police-officers at my elbows, I succeeded in making my way to the distressed object, and found her as I have described; and, when the bands were untied that confined her wrists, arms, and legs to the bedposts, she had lost all sense and motion. I gave her restoratives, which somewhat revived her, and had her wrapped up in blankets, and brought the poor creature again to her adopted village, where I took lodgings for her at twelve shillings a week. She was allowed to be there without restraint, with a kind woman to attend to her comforts. Myself and daughter called often to see her, and, as you have before observed, Mr. Ardent, it was now the cause of humanity: you first set the example to the surrounding neighbours, by a conduct that does your heart and mind credit, for no individual should be persecuted to death unless for very great crimes indeed, and then it is somewhat doubtful in some minds. We both saw her, and was careful that she wanted for no earthly comfort that her situation required; and in three weeks from the time I brought her away from the unnatural son and servant, she died."

“Horrid! most horrid!” exclaimed her former lover, with much emotion.

Rhymer continued—“She did not die, Mr. Ardent, without strong suspicion of having poisoned herself with laudanum, to remove the load of reflection and grief that oppressed her during her intervals of sanity. Her last words were, ‘I am sorry I prosecuted Ardent, his only fault was in being too fond of me—I am sorry, I am very sorry,’ and expired. The duke, with a gracious condescension, called upon her in her last illness, desiring she might have every comfort and convenience. The Reverend Mr. Aimwell administered to her, from time to time, spiritual consolation; but she is no longer in want of any one’s care and solicitude, and we will hope she is now where there is no trouble, either from seducers or ill-advisers.”

“I think I never heard of so grievous a story, or so pitiable a tale before. The poor unfortunate in her last moments did me but justice: my greatest crime was being too fond of her, for she was not worthy of my undivided attention and extreme solicitude for her welfare. You are deserving the thanks of all considerate people,

who are friends of humanity and every Christian feeling of philanthropy, Mr. Rhymer ; for you have taken pleasure in relieving the burdens of human existence rather than oppressing it. This story, as you have pathetically told it, without embellishment, must make a considerable impression upon the thoughtless, inconsiderate, intemperate, and licentious characters in both sexes, and will certainly act as a warning to the female part of society, how they give way to vindictive feeling and unrestrained anger ; while, to the opposite sex, my own character will present calamities of a very serious and grave cast, the consequence of attending to the suggestions of a wayward fancy or imagination, rather than to the counsel of wisdom, the result of hard-bought experience, which my father's better judgment, dictated, as it was, by the soundest reason, should have made me attentive to. Had I but followed my father's suggestions, this great calamity could not have befallen this poor woman, or at least I should not have been instrumental in hastening the crisis. The interposing her influence, contrary to the counsel of a parent, was her overthrow, and eventually caused the ruin of her-

self and son. Such disastrous consequences convey this salutary admonition to the thoughtless youth of both sexes—that to deviate from parental counsel is the worst of evils, and fraught with unheard-of inconveniences, as blighted prospects, irretrievable loss of opportunity, time misemployed, and numberless other disasters, which may be traced to shunning the dictates of prudence, sober sense, and rational enjoyment. Had I but done so, I should now have been a happy man; as it is, I present the picture—nay, the reality, of occasional wretchedness—a mind torn with disquietude—insulted, misrepresented, and for what?—for speaking truth, and deviating from the practice of society, established in an era of our history famous for licentious principles, and deviations from every manly and known virtue.”

Thus Ardent accused himself and the times, the ignorance of past ages and the licentiousness of their amours, which admitted of plurality and freedom beyond what is admissible in the present enlightened state of society.

“ This rare occurrence, it must be admitted, was attended with disastrous consequences to all

parties, but the evil still remains; the obnoxious penalty still exists for the countenance of wh—edom, concubinage, and mistress-keeping; and I will,” said Ardent, “devote my future life to its repeal, or it will eventually overturn both the church and state in these kingdoms, by producing such a relaxation of manners as will terminate only in their final overthrow, as it did unhappy France previous to the revolution in that country, which afterwards convulsed the whole earth to its foundation. The subject of moral principle is important to every age and to every nation: the aggregate feeling of the people, when once contaminated, is the death of millions and the destruction of worlds. This has repeatedly happened, *ad infinitum*, from the beginning of time to the present day, and accounts for the ignorance, prejudice, and barbarity which still exist in the present human race; yet it is unquestionably improved, or anarchy would again succeed depravity, and, but for bold writers and the public spirit of the press, would yet involve this country—nay, even the world, in perpetual darkness. It is by stemming the torrent of misrule in its commencement that the world is saved; it

is the endeavour of some good men to stop the calamitous inundation of immorality and licentiousness of prevailing opinions, and he that does it most effectually is deserving of the applause of every age, from the present to the latest times."

" I have not informed you of the whole of the calamity, Mr. Ardent," resumed our worthy village oracle, after patiently listening to Ardent's tirade ; " this is not all that befell herself and son, for scarcely had the breath left her body, ere Lawyer Rapine put an execution into her house for his bill, and seized upon all the plate, and took it away with him for payment. In consequence of the long litigation and illness she was afflicted with, her house and lands were sold to pay off the mortgage of twelve hundred pounds, which she was under the necessity of borrowing, to carry on the contest against you and support herself until she died. There was a small surplus left out of the remainder of the purchase-money, and it was necessary to learn or ascertain to whom that really belonged, and who was the rightful heir. Young Freelove put in his claim, but it was important to know whether or not he was the rightful heir. He in consequence referred

me to his guardian, as he used to be called, and the uncle of the deceased Mrs. Freelove."

"The mystery is then unravelling itself at last," said Ardent.

"I was referred to Colonel Lovemore, a man of large fortune living in Portland Place, who has a family by his wife, who is now living, and there, under proper injunctions of secresy and caution, I learned the following narrative.—Being with his regiment about twenty years ago, on the coast of Kent, he there saw, for the first time, Mrs. Freelove, then a young woman under her father's roof, who was a fisherman. He seduced her, and, after having done so, repented, and persuaded her to marry a soldier in his regiment, giving the husband money with her to induce him to marry her, and raising him to the rank of a corporal."

"A corporal Trim, I'll be bound," remarked our hero, "and the uncle the very identical Uncle Toby in Sterne's history. But, jesting aside, Mr. Rhymer, it was a very serious business:—so, then, the spawn of great men are let loose upon society, to deteriorate the public morals; but they shall find me what Juvenal was to the Roman people, a satirist of the severest

cast ; or what Junius was in the last century, who levelled the arrows of satire at the throne, the senate, and the bar, until they cried out for mercy. Such was the great Lord Chatham, for I have no doubt he was the author of that great work which bears the name and conveys the principles of Junius, who benefitted not only his own age but all succeeding ones.”

Mr. Rhymer smiled assent.—“ And now, to proceed with my narrative, Mr. Ardent, if you please : the soldier was fond of her——”

“ Rather say the corporal, Mr. Rhymer, as he had become a man of rank in his profession as a soldier, and was honoured with doing the dirty work of a great man.”

“ Well, then, the corporal was fond of her, and, there is no doubt, would have made her a good husband ; but Colonel Lovemore still visited her in the absence of the corporal, which, upon his finding out, caused both words and blows, and this happened frequently, which hurt the colonel’s nice sense of propriety ; and he, with that delicacy characteristic of the man of honour and the soldier, purchased her of the corporal again, giving him money to part with her as he would any other

article of merchandize. The colonel then had writings drawn up by an attorney; which the husband signed, relinquishing all claims to her hereafter, or any property she might have settled upon her. Colonel L. then placed her in a country town, with a widow lady."

"I have frequently heard Mrs. Freelove lament the death of her companion, the widow of an officer, or, perhaps, a former mistress."

"After this lady's death, the colonel bought her this estate, which has been lately sold; in fact, I bought it, to pay off the mortgage upon it of twelve hundred pounds I lent to her; he repaired it for her, and then allowed her an annuity of some hundreds a-year to support her establishment."

"Enabling her to impose upon the public, and me in particular," retorted Ardent; "indeed, I think it seems strange you should have advanced this lady twelve hundred pounds to carry on a prosecution against me."

"It was not with that design, my young friend, but to keep her in existence; for the colonel, finding her determined to carry on a prosecution against you, ceased his allowance, and, but for

my supply, or being answerable for her bills, she must have gone to gaol. Her lawyer arrested her for a large sum immediately the actions ceased against you, and, to prevent that evil, I advanced twelve hundred pounds, in all, to pacify the claimants upon her estate and person; and, but for me, she would have died in prison, or her property must have been sold previous to her death—so that she may be truly said to have spent her last guinea to ruin you.”

“ This is some extenuation, my good friend, if not a complete apology; for who can control a wilful woman, when determined upon revenge? But had you not supplied her with cash or credit, the prosecution must have dropped from want of funds.”

“ Not to dwell on what cannot now be remedied, she changed her marriage name,” said Rhymer, “ from Fainwell to Freelove, and represented herself as the widow of an officer, a remote branch of the family of a nobleman of high rank and large estate.”

“ She frequently informed me of her being the widow of an officer of high family.”

“ Colonel Lovemore, finding her determined to

spend her last guinea to ruin you, ceased his allowance to her ; thus she may ascribe her ruin to Lawyer Rapine and a few others, who were interested that she should not be upon terms with you or adhere to your counsel. They were jealous of your former influence over her, and, fearing it might return, to their exclusion, urged her on to ruin herself, by way of gratifying their vicious propensities. The surplus of her property, as I have stated, about three hundred pounds, became her son's, which he soon squandered away. Young Freelove might even then have experienced a friend in Colonel Lovemore, but he was so dissipated that it was impossible to countenance him, for the commission the colonel gave him or procured for him in the artillery, he was obliged to resign from his ill conduct : after which he married a servant, with whom he had seven hundred pounds, which he spent and then left her destitute, since which he has become a lawyer's clerk : so that, as before remarked, this unfortunate woman may be literally said to have spent her last guinea in her struggle to ruin you. As it is, she has half ruined your mental peace and happiness, and has inflicted misfortunes which, but for her indiscre-

tion, might never have caused a furrow on your brow."

"As you say, Mr. Rhymer, I have no superlative happiness to boast of; yet, considering the nature of the circumstances that opposed me, and the strength of purse brought against me, it is very well it was no worse,—and, although bad enough, God knows, yet it might have been worse. It is true I feel sorely wounded by the conflict, for the struggle was desperate; yet truth, being my shield and buckler, still kept off the most malignant of the enemy's darts, or, in other circumstances, I must have sunk, never to rise again. As it is, I have a great deal to do, much to learn, and some few things to unlearn; and, finally, to attempt a redress of those injuries that have been so abundantly heaped upon me, for daring to be the vindicator of truth and upright principle. Who shall prevail eventually remains yet undetermined: I am but sharpening my quills into pens, studying the science of human nature, unravelling the arts, secret springs, and private motives, that influence a preposterous world. An insult has been committed upon my person for daring to speak the truth, which is contrary to the

canons of the church, and, if not of the church, of God and nature. It is now my turn to fire my artillery upon them, and those who have done me this great injustice."

"Bravo! my friend, I commend your spirit; the vices of former times, as well as the present, will bear a tolerable copious animadverting upon: they are incased in brass, and claim a long prescriptive right to seduce, ensnare, mislead, and betray. There is one other circumstance, Mr. Ardent, I have to inform you of: finding Mrs. Freelove had a husband in a humble situation of life, I made all the inquiry I could for him—at last, I found him, after a long and painful search; my object was to communicate the death of his wife, and to relieve his distress with the remainder of her property, if it was necessary. I found him in a very low and even menial situation,—that of cad, to clean horses at a post-house. I offered to relieve him, which I did to a certain extent, and proposed to remove him and take care of him, which he declined. His faculties seemed to be blunted by adversity, or rather by not knowing what prosperity meant; and the communication of the death of his wife, which I expected would

have affected him much, on the contrary, affected him but little, or not at all. He seemed lost to all domestic endearments, and the passion which has raged so violently in the breast of others was apparently a total stranger to him ; so that he may be considered a happy man in his own ignorance, which, as a cloud, obscured him from the shafts of fortune, and rendered him invulnerable to her attacks."

The friends, after further discussion of particulars as connected with this history, parted for that time ; at a subsequent meeting further discussion arose as to who should be appointed to write the lady's funeral oration ; and, as it elicits some ingenious reasoning and complimentary adulation upon the deceased victim of depravity and licentious amours, we will subjoin the particulars of the discussion between the three friends, in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

IN the course of a short time after the preceding information given to our hero by his friend Rhymer, he again revisited the forest, to inquire if anything new had transpired, when the subject of the funeral oration became warmly contested, as to which of the three individuals alluded to, namely Foresight, Rhymer, or Ardent should be entrusted with so serious a composition—liable to much obloquy, if unfaithful, and, if a true picture of the deceased, plaudits proportionate to its merits should be freely bestowed, without restriction or detraction.

The emulation among these rival candidates for applause was considerable, it must be admitted; but, however, not to lead the reader into an error, the author is so far conscientious as not to implicate either gentleman in a disreputable manner, for, when he speaks of emulation, and contesting the palm of advocacy, to display abilities in the celebration of the long

unknown and mysterious lady of Windsor Forest, it must be looked upon in a figurative and playful sense, the intention of the writer being to produce pleasantry and cheerful ideas, after such a long list of calamities and disasters; like an afterpiece or farce succeeding a deep tragedy, for the purpose of putting the audience into a good humour with the actors and themselves, before they leave the theatre. The author has introduced this chapter, and all succeeding ones to the end of the volume, for the like purpose, to amuse the reader with complimentary extravagancies, in the hope of exciting the risible faculties, or giving that ludicrous description of real or imaginary events as to border on bombast. The contrast, variety, and burlesque gravity may be considered as part of the entertainment—for what appearance would the dignitaries on a court day make without their gown and wig? It is a part of the paraphernalia belonging to their respective offices, and, however grotesque a lord chancellor may appear by himself alone, yet, when associated with others equally absurd, the effect is not singular: all are entitled to respect by virtue of their office, and, if the office does not dignify the man, the man

must dignify the office by all the ostentatious display of abilities and learning he or they can summon to their aid, as it is very properly denoted by their several costumes. For instance, a counsellor has three tails to his wig, proving him to be three times as amorous as any other man in his majesty's dominions,—consequently, a great favourite with the ladies. A judge will have but a moderate-sized wig, implying him to be but moderately wise; while a lord chancellor will have a wig large enough to cover a large round of beef, proving he has many good things within his gift. And as to the bishops, grave as they are in deportment, what can prove their morality more effectually than their aprons, which give them the appearance either of disabled men or a parcel of old women. The gorgeous apparel of a duke, lord, earl, marquis, and the like, are each expressive of the quantity of gold they possess, for that is the test of all true greatness, not merit. The same by kings: all are denoted by their consequence, and more frequently so than by their virtues, unless, indeed, we except from the general rule our great and good king. Perhaps this is burlesqueing things deemed sacred

and divine: so was the exhibition of our hero in the parish church of his village, making a town clerk of him, to promulgate disagreeable news already too unpleasantly public; but which served to fill the lawyers' pockets, and expose the inflictors of the punishment to ridicule, if not to contempt.

It became necessary to ascertain who should be the individual entrusted with so important a part of the ceremony as that of composing the funeral oration; for, however late it might appear, yet there is an adage that somewhat apologizes for all procrastinated delays, and that is,—‘Better late than never.’ Ardent was for throwing the responsibility upon each of his friends, neither of whom, from delicacy to the deceased, liked the proposition, or rather seemed to decline the proffered offer, that it might be pressed upon him with the greater earnestness and perseverance. The two resident friends combining against our hero, he was selected as the man, and thus eventually the oratorical duty was forced upon our friend Ardent, which may very naturally be supposed to have somewhat confounded his modesty. The friends of our hero alleged that he was deci-

dedly the most influenced by the charms of the lady while living, and, therefore, they would not do him the injustice of depriving him of those honours that remained, to which he had an undoubted right and prior claim, and whom the deceased herself would in all probability have preferred, from his being by much the younger of the three,—no slight recommendation in the estimation of the sex, when having to decide between the young, the middle-aged, and the more advanced in years: at all events, it was unanimously voted that our hero should be the man—as he had been her choice previous to her dissolution, similar honours should now be conferred upon him after her decease. That point was settled after much preliminary discussion, argumentative reasoning, and logical debate; but, that our readers may not be deprived of the *morceau*, we will introduce them individually to the debating-room, or to the conversation that passed upon this singularly important business.

Mr. Rhymer, the village poet, seemed to have a priority of claim to commence the mock-heroic and sententious style of argument: the following was the manner, as well as the substance, of what

passed, in an animated and continued flow of eloquence, between the friends, which the reader is requested to suppose was scarcely equalled in ancient days,—that is, in the time of Cicero, Pericles, and Demosthenes, and certainly not to be compared by the modern displays of oratory in either houses of Parliament. There was no want of inflated diction, pompous eloquence, clear enunciation, and that pathos and bathos the true criterion of men of mind, and the characteristic of first-rate orators of Nestorean and Ulyssean pretensions to attention and consideration. The Catholic debates, notwithstanding their Cullens, their Grattans, their Pitts, Foxes, and Burkes, are left infinitely in the background of the picture, when compared with this distinguished assembly, discussing the merits of the person to be selected for this important business, which was not an oration over the great Cæsar, for that had already been done by Marc Antony, nor was it on any other considerable individual of ancient renown, or pretension to an elaborate oration and extraordinary distinction. It was reserved for our hero to display his powers of eloquence, his research, his penetration, his

erudite knowledge of the world, of men, and of manners, and, above all, the subject of his panegyric and declamation. It was an opportunity that now presented itself; but, if left undone or omitted, would never occur again. It was no ordinary woman to be eulogized, commended, or dispraised; the lady herself was, comparatively speaking, not insignificant, for she had been the humble instrument of degrading an upright mind in its progressive advancement in obtaining information. She was but the puppet of power, the plaything of the hour, the amusement, the solace, and the refined luxury of a banqueting member of Parliament, who, not satisfied with his wife and family, consisting of seven children, revels in debauchery to the overthrow of numbers, including the hero of this history. Cleopatra was a distinguished woman and a celebrated voluptuary; the heroine of this tale endeavoured to follow her example, and degrade our hero in his own eyes, as the former did Antony, but, finding that system incomplete, she next strove to humble him before the public—in that she was partly successful. It should now be inquired into why or wherefore this degradation, to exte-

nuate the vices of a Parliament man ? Why was it not ascertained before, who he was and what he was ? Then the holy offices of religion would not have been polluted, and the members of its church establishment been degraded by offices not worthy of the bellman or dogwhipper of the village to see executed, and still less to inflict such a punishment upon an honest man for speaking the truth. Did they think this tarnish upon his honour and his word of little importance ? What if he proves it far otherwise ?

The Nestor of the village thus commenced his address, and obtained considerable attention and applause while opening the discussion :—

“ As you, Mr. Ardent, have always been a very great admirer of the fair and softer sex, having sounded the praises of the virtuous female, as you then thought Mrs. Freelove, and as she was your model in that instance, you can with equal facility, I have no doubt, expatiate on the unfortunate lady in her declining fortunes, or real character, and also on the recent events, as they have occurred ; for indeed, Mr. Ardent, I think with my friend Foresight, that you are the best and only qualified member of this assembly, therefore

the best entitled to pronounce a funeral oration upon this mournful subject and mournful occasion. Besides, you knowing more of the lady's charms and perfections than we can presume to have a knowledge of, and being by far the most enterprising of all her lovers, we deem you to be unquestionably the most proper person to give effect to an eulogium profound, solemn, and convincing, as can be formed upon an individual matchless in dissimulation, artifice, and caprice."

"I also join my testimony," said Foresight, "in favour of Ardent, that he should be the individual appointed upon this great event; for who can be supposed so capable of giving due effect to an illustration the most solemn, and at the same time the most responsible, we have as yet heard or read of in either ancient or modern times. To have sounded the praises of a good woman, would have been easy, and we would each have contended for the palm of illustrating by our oratory the just praises of the sex, for to speak in commendation of a woman of deformity of principle, and an abuser of the bounty of Providence in her own person, far surpasses my art to illustrate, or even attempt to pourtray. It requires an

individual experienced in these particulars to give a defined and true picture of the deceased in her various wanderings from the paths of duty and the licentiousness of immoral principle. We both feel ourselves incompetent to the task of defining so varied a character, admitting of so much light and shadow in her composition : as an innocent individual, a religious devotee, a saint, and a harlot, by turns, as the fit was upon her. You are the man to undertake impossible things, and make a seeming impossibility possible, would you but favour us by undertaking the task. We are well aware that the mock species of heroics is the most difficult of all composition ; the serious and the burlesque have each had their professors, but in attempting to unite both thousands have failed, so that we only do ourselves justice in declining the proffered offer ; and as our zeal was never equal to your own, neither can it be said our enthusiasm or knowledge of the subject can be compared to yours. Therefore, upon sufficient grounds, we both relinquish the honour of celebrating the praises of this distinguished woman in your favour. I therefore give my most unbiassed decision in your favour, Mr.

Ardent, as hero of the forest, and the best qualified person to bestow those praises due to virtue, as well as animadversion when they are found deficient."

Both gentlemen having given their opinions and resumed their seats, it became our hero's turn next to give his sentiments upon the present topic of debate, and, as he was never backward or reluctant to express those sentiments, they were produced upon this occasion with all that fervour and zeal that should characterize the undoubted hero of a true story and the champion of the softer sex; and although wanting in principle, yet the individual to be expatiated upon had her good qualities as well as disreputable practices; and as it was a new subject in debate never before heard of,—namely, that of sounding the praises of an immoral person, he, with the usual characteristic of his ardent genius, contended with difficulties as if in his proper element, proud of the opportunity of engaging in desultory warfare, or the battle of opinions, by conflicting and opposite principles; that upon such occasions he would draw comparisons and fancy he heard the clash of arms, the firing of artillery, the rolling of the

drum along the lines, and the discharge of musketry, as upon a well-appointed field-day, or the battle's roar, the screams of the vanquished, and the shouts of the victors, with colours moving and waving in the wind, horsemen renewing the charge, and fuglemen selecting their particular object of attack. Occasionally, in the heat of argumentative reasoning, he thought, in the satirical points of satire, he perceived the thrust of the bayonets by the common soldier or the spear and dagger's point, in gladiatorial combat or individual warfare. Now, whether the contention is with the pen or by speech, by the sword, the bayonet, the duel by pistols, the musket, or by artillery and Congreve rockets, the cause is the same—namely, to decide the difference. The difference of opinion, or errors, is the consequence of not regulating them agreeable to the standard of right principles, which is difficult to discern, and human action follows, which is the attendant of ill-judged opinion previously conceived and not controverted or controlled by human reason and common sense,—most generally arising in the higher orders of society, or those that should set the best examples; instead of which, what do

they but begin at the wrong end to check crime and licentiousness of principle,—lop off the foot as the guilty member, because the head or stomach has been the first incentives to lust; intoxication, gambling, drinking, eating to excess, or any other of the non-naturals, proving the evil to exist not much in the lowest ranks of life, as those who govern them.

The argumentative reasoning in these volumes is intended to prove the fact that a mortal disease exists somewhere, and that immorality in our great people, as they are termed, is the first cause, or *primum mobile*, of commotion or divisions in opinion among the people. That all cannot be rich is true, but all may have the necessities of life, were wealth and industry more nearly allied. But this is too wide a field for the present pages; enough has been advanced to elucidate the author's principles or positions, that the fault lies in the head and not in the heart of either man or woman.

We now resume the subject in debate between our three friends, Rhymer, Foresight, and our hero, whose turn it was now to speak, as being more interested in the discussion than either of

the former gentlemen, who had each, with great propriety, delivered their opinion, which was that all emulation on their parts was yielded in favour of Ardent ; that he was to be the chosen being that was to compose and give effect to the funeral oration upon the unfortunate lady and the *malapropos* genius of his evil destiny. It is impossible to expatiate upon vice in any other way than the serio-burlesque or the censor-like characters. The first is preferred upon some occasions, and upon others the last. It is immaterial under which garb she is known to the public, whether as a consummate actress, directed by greater geniuses than her own, or as the principal emanating in herself and influencing her own conduct. The effect was the same, as it partly destroyed and injured the peace of mind and prospects of our hero ; and although it may be extenuated by some individuals, saying he had value received, yet on the contrary it must be condemned by others, as highly destructive, not only to the peace of an individual family, but to many both in married and single life, and was to all intents and purposes the bane of virtue.

Extravagant hyperbole has been resorted to,

to give our readers further specimens of the mock heroic grandeur of eloquence and sublimity, or pretended sublimity of ideas, to be examined by the tests of ridicule alone rather than by the reasoning of common sense ; for who ever expects seriousness in buffoonery, or erudite wisdom unmingled with extravagance in any hero of romance, fable, or adventure, whether of real or pretended characters. Brutus pretended madness, to expel the Tarquins from Rome, and Junius hid himself from the rage of his enemies by concealing his name. The like is attempted in these pages, to conceal the full force of truth under the disguise of absurdity, and make less conspicuous to appearance the aim of the arrow that is intended to penetrate those obdurate minds that cannot be influenced by reason or the dictates of common sense.

After these qualifying limitations and restricted senses, we will proceed with Ardent's comments on the business proposed to him, for who can write sensible essays upon absurdity? who can picture vice and deformity with common patience, unmingled with disgust, without the aid of ridicule and the extravaganza of a luxuriant imagi-

nation ? It is beyond the author's ability ; neither does he conceive it possible to be attempted by others with success. Our hero's reply was after the following manner :—

“ Gentlemen, you are unanimous in voting me the honourable distinction of celebrating our former friend in preference to yourselves, and thus yield me the laurel-crown which is equally merited by either of you, who have deserved by your tender solitudes, upon this unhappy occasion, an equal claim to the valuable distinction of pronouncing, not so much an eulogium upon departed greatness, as comments upon meretricious and even flagitious conduct ; but such may in part be excused by the indulgence due to former friendship and that sympathy and kindness ever the attendant upon constant love. It would be unmanly not to yield the lady justice upon this occasion ; and, as she did me the honour of remembering me in her last moments of existence, it is but a return of kindness to endeavour to perpetuate her remembrance as long as possible.

“ I will now, gentlemen, at your suggestion and recommendation, accept your offer, and endeavour to do my best to pronounce the merits

and demerits of the most forlorn and flagitious of women ; the one who witnessed my joyous days, and who contributed so largely to her own and my unhappiness. She was, gentlemen, as you very well know, as unfortunate as she was fair ; as pleasing as she was deceitful ; as vindictive as unforgiving. These are not amiable traits of character, when united in one person, but the reverse, and would condemn any woman's reputation in existence ; unfortunately for themselves, they are too often betrayed by the men into indiscretions, and then discarded from them, as was this wilful and inconsiderate of women urged on by others to her destruction. It is a painful duty you have imposed upon me, gentlemen, and, as I am a sufferer by her vindictiveness, impartiality can scarcely be expected from me ; but such as Divine Providence has assisted me to form an opinion of, you shall be welcome to, erroneous as it may, and no doubt will be, thought by others. My abilities may be doubted, and I am myself scarcely competent to form a judgment as to whether I have the power to describe a woman of Mrs. Freelove's notoriety and pretensions to universal admiration ; yet, as the

fifth chapter of Proverbs has so properly described the harlot of antiquity in those days of comparative simplicity, I will at least attempt to describe the modern mistress or concubine of a great man. It will require a rigid impartiality to pourtray a woman so blameable in her conduct, as well as to mention, by way of contrast, what she was or what she appeared to my fancy in the days of her prosperity. If I accomplish both a description of her good qualities and her evil ones to your satisfaction, gentlemen, who are competent judges, having been eye-witnesses of her prepossessing manners and her resentments she practised in her prosperity and in her adversity, you will, no doubt, yield me that satisfaction due to justice, for having equalled your expectations, although not fulfilling the extent of my own wishes. There is an art in writing or speaking, that of giving utterance to words and sentiments in themselves disagreeable to the persons intended to be reflected upon, and yet so conciliated by explanation and commendation, that it is attended with this advantage: bold truths may thus be spoken which could not otherwise be elicited, for who would dare to be always pointing the javelin of malig-

nancy without the terms of conciliatory commendation and praise. The one would imply the monster or the savage in earnest; the other, the gentlemanlike revenge, retaliation, or rebuke, the friend to good-nature and good actions, and the enemy of evil propensities; for, as man is a compound of both good and evil, his propensity to error should be viewed with conciliatory kindness, and his efforts to good conduct be at least rewarded by commendatory praise. That equal justice may be done the vicious parts of her character as well as those which seemed virtuous, the opposing principles being necessarily very great, your indulgence, gentlemen, upon this occasion, will be required, to keep in countenance my feeble efforts. But if either of you, gentlemen, will take upon yourself the office of illustrating this famously vicious woman, I will resign the task you have allotted me with pleasure and satisfaction. The lady, in some degree, may be supposed to have embittered my feelings towards her; therefore, an unprejudiced recital of her vices may, with more reason, truth, and justice, be expected from either of your descriptions than from mine; treated, as I have been, with igno-

miny, contempt, and derision, for attempting to reflect upon her character, which was grossly imperfect.”

Mr. Foresight now rose and delivered his sentiments, as he had been appealed to and called upon for his answer.

“ With all due submission, Mr. Ardent, I beg leave to waive my priority of claim and pretensions through an earlier knowledge of the lady, to your zeal in her cause, which, upon this occasion, cannot be misplaced. As you have been the most impassioned of her admirers, therefore, in my humble opinion, you are the person of all others that should be selected upon this important occasion, to give due effect and elucidation to that subject which appears to be so very imperfectly understood in this country and throughout the world, as that of the subject of mistress-keeping and private concubinage ; for you have felt unutterable things, and have sustained the reverse of fortune with equal fortitude.” Having delivered his sentiments with a conciseness worthy of a Lacedemonian or ancient Spartan, the worthy and respectable Mr. Foresight seated himself, again to become a silent auditor.

The Nestor of the village again rose from his seat, and, with imperturbable gravity, thus delivered his opinion:—

“ You are the hero of the tale, Ardent : however fabulous some of the transactions may appear, yet, to my certain knowledge, they were represented in the times when you were an inhabitant among us in this forest. You are the most proper individual to bestow justice on the lady, by pronouncing her eulogium, or funeral oration ; giving her commendation where deserving, and where defective in morals and principles, scourge with that proportionate qualification of censure, as charitable indulgence and the tender offices of past friendship may seem to justify and require. It is not the flattery of a sycophant, nor the indiscriminate and intemperate language of an inveterate enemy we wish to hear, but the suitable medium of praise and dispraise, as her mixed qualifications of perfections and imperfections may seem to sanction. You were her firmest and most enthusiastic of admirers—you developed the secret mysteries of her soul in life, and it is that portrait we now request of you after her decease. Aspasia had her admi-

rers and her historians ; Cleopatra had the same ; and shall this celebrated woman of this truly romantic region, the enchantress of these far-famed forest wilds and elysian bowers, be never heard of more ? Forbid it, heaven ! grant that she may become the controller of the destinies of evil genius in future ; showing, by example, the impolicy of ill conduct, and the praises and rewards due to feminine virtues, with the ill consequences attending the relinquishment of them ; as exemplified by the malignancy of this ill-advised woman, which ended in the ruin of all her fortunes, and eventually of life itself."

Having thus expressed his sentiments, the sage gentleman again resumed his seat. The mock-heroics were then continued by the friends, to their mutual amusement, it may be presumed. The author is very well aware that he is on dubious ground, and so he will continue to the end of this chapter ; for who can be serious upon questionable pretensions to reason or common sense, either on the part of the author, the hero, or any character connected with this drama of human life, partaking, as it does, of that burlesque gravity and ludicrous seriousness con-

nected with laws, institutions, and society, in what are termed the middle and dark ages of church history, in the times of Popery and papal tyranny, and in part extended to the present age? The intention is not to animadvert in an angry or vindictive sense, but with good-natured satire and raillery, that will shame the individuals alluded to rather than wound their private and public feelings by the severity of sarcasm or the malignancy of reproachful epithets; for, as he was inconvenienced by others in no ordinary degree, in no ordinary degree has he attempted to inconvenience them by laughter, ridicule, and, not unfrequently, by serious animadversion. Rabelais did the same; Butler, Cervantes, and other eminent men described those inconveniences they complained of;—it is, at worst, but harmless mirth, to amuse the idle, the valetudinarian, and those who delight to contemplate the characters of men and women in their varieties. The authors are not to be condemned or censured, but excused; for when a mind is warped out of its proper bent or inclination, the consequences are a strong inclination to make known to the public their feelings and experience, with the design of

benefitting others by their example and ill fortunes ; for were not men to do this who have active minds, life would become a blank, and not worth existing in, as it appeared to Sir Samuel Romilly, Whitbread, and others—it is better to laugh than cry at the folly of others, and to jest rather than commit suicide, as some do.

“ Gentlemen,” resumed our hero, when he again commenced his harangue upon this important subject, “ I am to suppose, then, I am your orator and expounder of my private feelings and sentiments upon this melancholy occasion, as that of describing the lady we are conversing upon in all the agreeable lights and shadows she appeared to me during her prosperous days, or my early acquaintance with her. She then appeared, indeed, divine, and I admired her, not only as a beautiful woman, but as a virtuous one also ; no ecstasy, no enthusiasm, could exceed mine—it might have been fairly called, without exaggeration, love’s young dream. If such was my enthusiasm, judge, if you can, of my disappointment upon finding her to be only the shadow of a virtuous woman, and not substantially a real one ; I then loved her only as a woman, and adored her no

longer as a divinity. The subsequent parts of her character and conduct are but too well known for me to attempt to tire you by a repetition; but such as my humble abilities can produce for your amusement you shall be welcome to upon this occasion, not more in justice to the departed lady than to myself, the most unfortunate of her votaries. That I loved her too tenderly, is most true, the excess of which will be seen by the extravagant eulogy upon her personal charms, which I shall shortly make it my business to narrate: they then appeared to me real, and I have not yet sufficiently recovered my sober senses as to believe the contrary upon all occasions, and only upon extraordinary moments of conviction can I be prevailed upon by my judgment to think that she was really and truly a vicious woman. Such is Cupid's artifice,—he blinds those he would ensnare, and then leads them captive, at his will and pleasure, into the labyrinths of unlawful love, until, overtaken by its counterpart, jealousy, and its natural consequences, retaliation or revenge, on the one side or the other, but most commonly on both; a short sketch of which will be also entered upon,

to prove there is no pleasure in this world without a proportion of alloy. And, as your good-nature, my friends, will still consider me competent to become the Marc Antony of this history, or orator pronouncing the funeral oration upon our deceased friend, I must even feel myself flattered by your condescension, and prepare myself to comply and make known my sentiments of this once sovereign lady;—for, with Cæsar, she may have said, ‘I came, I saw, I conquered.’ Such was her magic influence, and such the magic spells by which she enchained her votaries, that the Reverend Dr. Allworthy himself was apprehensive of her influence, saying, he was but as other men, and, therefore, flew from her bewitching circle, lest he might become entangled. Her ambition at length laid her low in the earth: she attempted to secure the hearts of all men, and was by herself subdued. Such is the feeble outline of my oratory, the minutiae will fill up the picture.

THE FUNERAL ORATION.

Satire is very ill-becoming in the speech of man; but vice will excite the resentment of the most mild. It is pitiless to display the weakness of an individual, although famous for long practised wickedness, which overcasts the brow with clouds of melancholy and broodings of dark despair. Gall for a season overflows my troubled speech while describing the ruins of her mind, wrecked by deceit, hypocrisy, and delusion. It had been ordained by fate, that virtue should lose its seat—religion its purity—common honesty become a mere name—yet that one woman should put on the semblance of each, to be the more potent in charms and become the bane of multitudes. It is no common viciousness I rehearse, but consummate art; the charms of person combined with all the milder graces, and the power of imparting the most enthusiastic joy—and in what did it terminate? A total annihilation of mind, a dismal gloom of frenzy, and maniacy. Hail! all ye horrors of dark despair, ye ravings of perpetual strife, from discord within the breast; ye wild disturbers of a perturbed

imagination—hail ! From whence were all the symptoms of a disordered brain ? what spectre haunted her peace ? Were the fits of trembling and anguish, never before experienced, the result of a trivial cause ? Alas ! no. She is become the victim of error long pursued, to the ruin of many ; it was the recoil of a misspent life, and of her last exertions in particular, with unequal powers, which overthrew her strength of body and mind to their total ruin. She was vain enough to imagine, by the flattery of sycophants, that she could establish vice in the bosom of the church, and overturn virtue by a semblance of truth and innocence ; false notions thus obscured her sight, and dimmed the eye-balls of perception, until the final period arrived which unveiled the hidden decrees of the Most High God ; then to his throne of mercy she bent her knees in supplication, to be accepted at his holy tribunal.

The friends expressed themselves amused with this specimen of his eloquence, as they were pleased to term it ; and, having given them a description of the lady in her adversity, they now requested of him to favour them with a repre-

sentation of her in her more prosperous days. To please his friends he consented to become the apologist, or rather the panegyrist, of the lady, the heroine of this history.

EULOGIUM.

This fair penitent was once the loveliest of the most lovely; from Nature's mould she received the lineaments of a form which certainly was excellent. She was thought to possess innocence and virtue in all its purity. The loves and graces played around her person in all the gambols of sportive mirth. She was the delight of every eye. Her simplicity in appearance equalled the doves; she was apparently as pure as the driven snow. Her breasts were as alabaster, and heaved with palpitations of sympathy and tenderness. Her charity to the poor was unbounded: her orisons to her God were as frequent as the rising of Aurora to illumine the eastern sky, the progress of whose splendour witnessed her praise of the Deity; and when the western hemisphere received its golden tissues, a hymn was chanted to the Almighty to protect her in her repose. She appeared an object worthy of man's adora-

tion. The groves whispered as she walked, as if greeting her presence; their inhabitants vocalled forth thanksgivings for their daily sustenance, received at her hands. The lawns and meads flourished around her; Flora decked the pastures with primroses and narcissuses, and diffused the fragrance of the May bloom. Her tender hand assisted Nature to raise the choicest of fruits, the gayety of whose blossoms vied in vivid tints with the flowers of the lawn; the garden received her aid in direction, which in gratitude returned a bountiful supply of horticultural produce. The house in which resided this peerless favourite of mankind, previous to her fall, was the scene of conviviality and delight: wine sparkled upon the board, the variety of which defied satiety; the choicest viands were bountifully dispensed, and the banquet was crowned with mirth. This scene is now changed—the luxuriant woods have fallen by the severity of the axe; the choristers of the groves are no longer fed by her tender hands, and, having lost their home, sing requiems of sorrow on her tomb.

The friends both complimented our hero upon

his eulogium, saying but one characteristic was wanting, and that was a really estimable character, for had she, as they were pleased to say, but one-half of the virtues you have enumerated in reality untinged by vice, she had been at this time a living model of purity and excellence in the female character ; misfortunes would not have followed in her footsteps, nor calamities have mingled her body with the dust. She would now have been a living example of charity, and an ornament to her sex ; the rising generation would have blessed her benevolence ; her friends would have been happy in her society, and rejoiced in her prosperity.”

These opinions were expressed by the village Nestor, and are worthy of attention and consideration by the serious and the gay, the frivolous and the more profound.

Mr. Foresight, with that caution and reflection usual with him, spoke to the following effect :—

“ Your love-adventures, Mr. Ardent, are of that character that they somewhat resemble in importance those of antiquity. Your Messalina has given a publicity to your amours, which, but for the pains she took, would not have exceeded

the boundary of the village, or have escaped from the confines of the forest ; it was an ill-judged prosecution for both of you—the lady in meeting her death-blow by the conflict, and you made an enthusiast for life. The inflicting that opprobrious penalty upon you, however mitigated, placed a seal of condemnation on the papal edict of this country, which authorizes the punishment of honest indignation when interfering with their own or predecessors' effeminate luxuries. This age is too refined for savage barbarism, and the restrictions and restraints of speech, as enforced by the Inquisition, which are no longer appropriate to the present age of refined manners and those just notions of propriety we each of us imbibe with our mothers' milk ; for such is the tribute of commendation due to the present enlightened state of society, proving the march of intellect is on the advance, and barbaric notions, as the inflicting of severe penalties for slight offences, is not only a breach of decorum, but an insult to public opinion."

These sentiments were expressed with all the gravity and decency usual in a person accustomed to reason deeply upon cause and effect.

They were delivered in the room in which the lady had been accustomed to visit the philosopher while contemplating the heavenly bodies ; for she had often been a visitor upon those occasions, to regulate the dial-plate of her watch, or other trivial offices due to friendship and to friendship only, without any interchange of that troublesome passion, called, by the votaries of the fair sex, the science of love, or the art of that deity, which inflicts wounds on those who become the subjects of his caprice ; as those are well known to be who revel in the luxury of Cupid's clime, and participate in those spicey gales peculiar to Arabia Felix, or Mohammed's Paradise.

But not to anticipate the friend of our hero in his sentiments and opinions, we must again permit him to deliver his own ideas in his own words, without interpolation or addition, with the answer of Ardent ; for the subject now assumed the appearance of a very grave cast, that of an accusation and a defence. The charge was concise, and carried with it considerable weight, from having been delivered by so respectable a character as Mr. Foresight, the early friend of our hero : it was of this nature—

“ It is but justice to the deceased to say, that previous to her acquaintance with you, Mr. Ardent, Mrs. Freelove appeared to have many excellent traits of character ; and, but for you, might have lived to this day disbursing her charities, and led a life, if not unsuspected, at least unaccused.”

“ I stand condemned, and admit the justice of your accusation,” said Ardent : “ it was those seeming virtues that made me her friend, and then her lover, and which rivetted such an inconsistent affection that can never be forgot ; and, consequently, to inexperienced minds she was the more dangerous and the more to be dreaded. The Reverend Doctor Allworthy was of the same opinion : he dared not trust himself near her after knowing full well the seduction of her arts, and the ruin that attended upon them. How much more reason has the seducer of innocence to accuse his conscience, who has been the first cause of all this great calamity and mischief ! She might have been a useful member of society, instead of a snare most baneful to single and married life. Married ladies, when they heard of her operations and plans of seduction, shuddered at the idea of their husbands being near this dan-

gerous and seductive syren. Parents trembled at the thoughts of their children being exposed to the contagion of such pernicious example. This Proteus-like woman knew the principles of men by intuition—to the grave, she was sedate; to the pious, a religious enthusiast; to the libertine, all that was voluptuous; to the bacchanal, challenged the goblet to the brim; to the infidel, quoted Scripture with him for derision; to the wit, she was foremost in *double entendre*; the military character she entangled by her arts, arms, and stratagems, comparing the science of love to the art of war, in either of which it was lawful to surprise the enemy by a *coup-de-main*. Her pliable and ductile mind was as a mirror to the person who stood before her, which reflected his likeness in whatever manner he appeared—so artful her stratagems and so extraordinary in their consequences.”

To these remarks of Ardent, Foresight made this reply, singular in its application and unusual in the appreciation of the value of man’s happiness:—

“The inference I draw is this, that what you have lost in pocket, Ardent, you have gained in

experience ; what you have lost in peace of mind you have gained in wisdom—so that, agreeable to my notions, in the economy of human life you are but where you were—more wisdom and less pocket, more experience and less peace of mind. Wisdom is the result of experience, and experience is wealth, inasmuch as it guards against misrepresentation, which is the occasion of expense ; it is of value to man or woman in the same way as money, all depending on the use or abuse.”

“ In answer to this conclusion of yours, Mr. Foresight,” replied our hero, “ and as a general winding up of our argument, I could mention the names of wives who have left their husbands, and husbands who have left their wives, through the arts of this sorceress, who produced the greatest confusion in married and single life. Virtue by her was ridiculed as insipid ; she averred that crime gave zest to appetite ; and the maiden she scoffed at as green fruit.”

Thus ends the character of this lady, so long unknown within the regions of Windsor Forest. The phantom of the forest, her uncle, is known to the Author, but, from delicacy, he suppresses all communication likely to wound private feelings.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ON a fine day, when the bell was tolling, several groups of young men and maidens, in their Sunday's apparel, which was always the best their circumstances could afford, were lounging, as is frequently the case after Divine Service, in the church-yard of the village, in expectation of witnessing the funeral of Mr. Drinkhard. It was one of those afternoons genial with the warmth of nature, and which depicted the health of the young people, as they moved in couples or stood in groups, that a traveller's attention was excited more than usual, by a congregated assembly, larger than the rest, round a remarkable tombstone that stood over the grave of a lady, who was said to have died of a broken heart some few years before. It was on the left side of the pathway leading into the church, and about midway between the railings of the church-yard and the entrance porch: the following inscription was on the tombstone, which is described from the vil-

lagers' own words.—The words were so remarkable as to be easily impressed upon the mind ; and, thinking they might throw some light on this history, he made it his business to take a correct copy from the stone itself, to prevent any misapprehension or mistake in the name, date, circumstances, or even in the peculiarity of the phraseology, which is quaint and expressive enough, said to have been written by a former friend or lover of the deceased lady. But the reader must learn the particulars from the country people themselves, as it fell verbatim from their mouths. After a little spelling and rather bad enunciation, the first villager spoke after the following manner :—

“ Ah ! here lies poor Lady Freelove, who was so kind to poor people.”

Second Villager. “ It is many years since she walked and rode to church, as I have frequently seen when I was a boy.”

Third Villager. “ It was ten long years before a tombstone was talked of being raised to her memory.”

“ Ay,” said a fourth villager, “ the times are altered between now and then ! I remember all

the parties very well who called themselves friends of this lady, and, if it had not been for one more than the rest, we should not now have had a tombstone to read at this day. Mr. Rhymer, I am informed, was the principal promoter in erecting it, and it now looks us in the face every time we go and come from church ; and I am informed Mr. Ardent wrote the epitaph, as I think they call it ; indeed, it was mainly owing to not following his advice that she is not now living."

First Villager. " I mean to read the inscription until I have learned it by heart, and so says my wife and daughter."

Second Villager. " It was a melancholy story."

Third Villager. " My sweetheart and I have cried over it by moonlight many a time, and shuddered while we read it over and over again."

Fourth Villager. " Our minister and churchwardens say as how there is a good moral, and much piety may be learned from the small compass of a tombstone. Let us now read it over again : the young women all look this way when they go to church, and when they come from it, as if it was addressed to them in particular."

Fifth Villager. "I have heard it said as how, if she had been as good as she appeared to be, she would never have got into Lawyer Rapine's hands, for it was he ruined her, by all accounts."

Sixth Villager. "That's true enough: he entered her house, and would have sent her to gaol for the payment of his bill, had it not been for a friend, who came forward and paid the money; as it was, he took all the plate away, and some say he killed her first by bad advice. I will read the description on the stone."

The village orators, having uttered their opinions, listened to the one who now began to read the inscription, which was to this effect:—

"Beneath this stone is Mrs. Freeloze's grave: she was famed for benevolence and charity; in prosperity she had many virtues, and, we lament to say, many vices,—but charity atoneth for a multitude of sins, and, if her repentance is accepted by the Almighty, who shall revile the departed dead."

"This is the first part, neighbours; shall I read the second?"

They all assented, and the orator who read the first inscription commenced the second, which was to this effect:—

“ Young maidens, attend, hear my voice from the grave,—
Religion is your friend, your virtues will save ;
May Providence guide you away from the snare,
And the paths of the wicked avoid with great care.
Truth, honour, and virtue never forsake,
A warning by me I hope you will take.
Some virtues I had ; by vices I fell ;
In your village I lived, with you I did dwell.
You have heard me, seen me ; that time is now past—
Men have deceived me—I repented at last.

Born 17—.

Died 18—.”

“ This is a melancholy story,” said one of the villagers. “ It makes me sorrowful,” said a second. “ And so it does me,” said a third, wiping his eyes with a pocket-handkerchief, in which the whole group sympathized.

The churchwardens now coming forward, Mr. Rhymer being one of them, observing a number of persons round the unfortunate lady’s grave, said, “ You see, my friends, the ill consequence of following bad advice : a premature grave contains now all that was kind to poor people, but she neglected her own happiness ; and,” he continued, “ my friends, let me impress these serious truths upon your minds, that you may in like manner impress it on the recollection of your

wives and daughters—that religion and virtue in this life secure happiness here, and tranquillity hereafter.”

The funeral of Drinkhard was now beginning to make a slow progress up the gravel walk of the church-yard, supported, as the coffin was, upon men's shoulders, the undertaker walking before the deceased, who had been formerly the village apothecary, who died as he had lived, in a state of mental imbecility.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE DEATH OF DRINKHARD.

OUR hero, in one of those visits to the forest, frequent with him in the course of twenty succeeding years after leaving it, called upon his friend Foresight, who was always actively engaged in relieving the distresses of his fellow-creatures, particularly within the sphere of his former associations, when they were dropping out of the book of life into that of eternity. He informed our hero that Drinkhard was dying, who, on hearing the intelligence, called upon his old competitor and acquaintance in more auspicious days, and the condition he found him in was described by Ardent to a friend in the following concise manner, such as it was impressed on the mind of Ardent :—

THE DEATH OF DRINKHARD.—In a workhouse, on a stump-bedstead, in a state of apoplectic insensi-

bility, lay the man who had the honour of marrying a descendant of the great Lord Bacon, Chancellor of England. Drinkhard lived and died a worthless being; from his intemperance he became insane, was the companion of infamy,—neither of use to himself, his family, or the public.

This degenerate character had honours bestowed on his inanimate clay which were refused to him when an inhabitant of this mortal life; for he was then too degraded to deserve anything more from an injured public than what humanity dictated, in a country so highly conspicuous for kindness and a practice of the Christian charities. The neglect that followed his footsteps during life, was the consequent attendant of his vicious propensities, for he very improperly became the companion of his more ignoble examples. This conduct was calculated to deteriorate from his sum of human happiness, by contemplating human depravity and misery, which brought upon him the disgusting degradation of his mental faculties and corporeal infirmities. But, since they have ceased with his existence, the man of frailty is no longer remembered, and his collateral rela-

tionship to one who was a great man shields him as an ægis, and renders him invulnerable to the attack of his commentators, as he was alike insensible before his dissolution to either censure, commendation, or contempt.

The sacred pile of religion in the village shelters him, as if of high-born family, or as the late owner of great possessions, eminent virtues, or the most exalted piety, neither of which were his attributes. But, on the contrary, he is permitted to enter the sanctuary of the tomb within the hallowed walls of the church, from no ostensible merits of his own, but from his having been the consort of a remaining branch of an illustrious family, whose name is revered in the annals of English history, and who thus secured those solemn offices of religion and piety to his unworthy ally, more calculated for the meritorious reward of a better man. The name of Bacon, the great, the good, the eminent, the illustrious dead, sheds a protecting halo around the tomb of infamy, and diffuses over this unworthy character a portion of his own glory; and through the sanctity of his name is conveyed within the precincts of the most hallowed walls, that inferior being scarce

deserving the name of man. Such respect was paid to his funeral obsequies, that belies all the ill conduct of his past life, not only to the eminently virtuous woman his wife, but also to her children, who may truly regret their having so ungracious a sire, so totally unworthy of their great progenitor, the immortal philosopher and statesman, Lord Bacon Baron Verulam.

Such respect is, perhaps, no more than an honorary tribute to the eminently good, which afforded Drinkhard an honourable grave near his unfortunate wife, the descendant of one of England's brightest pillars and glory, although some centuries after the interment of that illustrious individual. Thus is extended a protection and countenance which Drinkhard cannot be said to have yielded to the relative and descendant of this great benefactor of mankind. Sleep on, in eternal death! and as your virtues, Drinkhard, while living, cannot be remembered, they are not recorded. This justice is your due: in the silence of sleep ye were the least offensive to decency and good manners, but when awake and in health, instead of being a blessing to others, ye were the avoidance of many and the

scoff of more, who pitied your intemperance and abuse of the bounty of nature, fortune, and religious virtues.”

And now the author takes this opportunity of protesting against the pollution of the sacred walls of religion by an interment of putrid bodies, which engender pestilential vapours destructive to the living principle of animal life, and unworthy of their sanctuary; for none can be deserving of such human and divine honours at the cost of the living inhabitants or survivors; for it deteriorates from the public health by the effluvia arising from corrupting animal matter. It is disgraceful to an enlightened state of society thus to congregate the living with the dead, to fill the coffers of the rich priest, prebend, or bishop of the diocese, who, while preaching the advantages of the next world, is the means of undermining the health of the inhabitants of this; converting the house of prayer into a charnel-house of human skulls and rotting bones, with all the disgusting processes attending animal corruption and decomposition, beyond the reach of medical art to control, producing that very plague and pestilence we offer up petitions to the Almighty God in our churches

to be delivered from, proving our clergy are the least attentive to the health of the inhabitants of this world, in receiving emoluments from both living and dead, which is contrary to sense and human understanding, as derived from God, the father of all things, through the advantages of education. A satirist might say,—O, ye sage and stupid, or ye wise and ignorant, why inter any individual within a place of sanctuary or within the walls of a church or house of prayer? for even the leaden coffin bursts its cearments, and pollutes with the putrid gas of its contents the surrounding atmosphere, through which we breathe and have our being. A recent instance has come within the author's knowledge of its pernicious tendency.

The churches of London and the churches in the suburbs have vaults, for which twenty, fifty, seventy, and even a hundred pounds is paid, for every human carcass thus taken to these sham-bles of the dead and deposited therein. At the new church, Chelsea, in the year 18—, a fire-burner descending into one of these golgothas, or places for preserving human bodies, was affected with the putrid gas, took the infection home to his family, and lost four children in one week by

the putrid fever. The medical man took the same putrid fever home to his only child, a daughter, and she died also. This is only one instance of fatality related out of many. Thousands are lost from mistaken piety, in thus venturing their health for hours to breathe the air arising from the pestiferous dead. The Catholics, in France and other countries, adopt the same destructive system. But when the individual is a notorious reprobate, decency, good manners, propriety, and every principle of right conduct, are then violated, by interring the worst example of conjugal and manly duties.

If it is your wish, sapient villagers, to canonize Drinkhard as a saint, then raise divine honours to Mrs. Freelove, and let the matchless pair have solemnities performed over them worthy of more sacred characters. This justice is due to the inhabitants of the village, that every feeling that could actuate humanity was exerted on the occasion to render the last stage of Drinkhard's life comfortable, and plenty of attendants to wait upon him (distinct from the more ordinary class of workhouse people), accompanied with great cleanliness; and Ardent was a witness of the

sympathy exercised by the more respectable inhabitants in obtaining comforts for the deceased while living, such as his former station in society might seem to demand, but which, from his inattention to the ordinary conduct of life, might, on the contrary, have brought on him a deserved neglect, rather than those attentions he received, which were yielded him by the moral obligations of those worthy friends who had remembered him in his prosperous days. The following lines were written shortly after his death :—

THE MATCHLESS PAIR ;

OR, THE

HEATHEN DIVINITIES OF THE VILLAGE.

In village church lies the man of physis,
Who no more will smile on some or give the nod ;
No more give cure to those who have a pthisic,—
Interred he lies, the mockery of a god.

In church-yard lies the beauty of the village,
In coffin now repose her amorous tones ;
Soft was the fair, voluptuous, the ill age,
When she presided priestess o'er the zones.

Her lovers numerous, age, mid age, youth,
Her bower's bewitching softness now is lost ;
And ancient lovers mumbled kisses mouth,—
Not so the youth with passion always toss'd.

Divinities both—himself a village god,
Herself a perfect heathen goddess born ;
Himself an Esculapian village clod ;
And she a Venus now in earth forlorn.

Both now lie mouldering in their clay-cold beds—
She in church-yard, how very unpolite ;
While he, the worst, lies in the church's shed,
Alas ! the change, enough to recall to light.

The fairy queen, who ruled the sceptred mace,
And through the ancient rural village drove
To church, arrived at proper time and place,
While Cupids waited their returning love.

But now old Time has changed his numbering clock :
He who in workhouse scorned is prized again :
While she in church-yard lies as stone or block,
And he in church's sacred aisle is lain.

Sure, rheumatism may attack the lady,
While he, to keep off gout, lies in the warm ;
They should have laid her in a place more shady,
While he lies snug, protected from the storm.

Both hapless, helpless—ah ! why are ye so ?
No more with love will ye be chained as friends ;
You each perfected vices here below,
And now lay there the world to make amends.

And a moral yield, I think I hear ye say,
By serious warning to the rising youth ;
For vice and lusts did both of us betray,
And ruin came through disregarding truth.

To your pastor attend, and list to instruction,—
He preaches sound wisdom, do you then give heed ;
His object is kindness, he gives you direction
How to be honest in word and in deed.

Be sober, be diligent, all that you may,
For vice is corruptive, and will you annoy ;
Be virtuous, be wise, no longer delay,
Nor list to ill counsel, for 'twill you destroy.

EPITAPH

On Drinkhard, the ancient Village Doctor.

Within this church lies the village workhouse doctor,
Who in health could have furnished business for a proctor :
Was either mad or drunk as Grecian slave,
And, to speak the truth, was thought more fool than knave.
More follies, vices, seldom e'er were met,
Than could be found in this once village pet ;
Swinish himself, he yet would Bacon wed,
And left the hymeneal for the cyprian bed ;
More of his frailties I forbear to name,
Lest I impute more than is due to fame.

Drinkhard was about four feet eight inches in height, pot-bellied, bow-legged, flushed face from hard drinking, hooked nose, dark hair, swarthy complexion, his legs resembled broomsticks, and, if he had any calves to them, they must have been seated high up, like a monkey's, and under the

knee-bands of his small-clothes : his wife is supposed to have died of a broken heart.

A SECOND EPITAPH ON DRINKHARD.

Beneath lies one of Esculapian breed,
Who village worthies used to purge and bleed ;
Other folks' maladies he tried to cure,
Yet was himself, of all, the most impure—
In mind and body foul to a degree,
In him was centred all iniquity :
Drunken, illiterate, bawdy, and what not,
All in their turns were practised by this sot.
Of swinish turn, himself he Bacon wedded,
Yet oft with filthy harlots was imbedded ;
And such the unblushing front of this sad varlet,
He'd brag of going with each drab and harlot ;
But, I believe, to give the devil his due,
He bragged more of his vices than was true.

Surely, his wife must have been deaf and blind,
To wed a man of such a form and mind ;
But she has left this world, and so has he,
And whether hereafter they'll keep company
I cannot tell ; but this much I surmise,
That if for her good deeds she mounts the skies,
They've bid good by, for he so high won't rise.
Others, I guess, are of this way of thinking :
Considering all his wh——ing, lying, drinking,
They fear in the next world he'll fare amiss,
So they've done whate'er they could for him in this ;
And by way of make-up laid him in the church,
Though when alive they left him in the lurch.

Mrs. Freelove, in her imbecile moments, countenanced this paragon of earthly perfection, and, although for forty-eight hours only, it proved, if any further elucidation was necessary to her character, that her mind must have been either excessively degraded, depraved, or partaking of that mental weakness peculiar to deranged persons. Both of them were compounds of all that was erroneous in the sexes, with some mitigation on the part of the lady, as she was first seduced from the paths of duty, to become the paramour of a great man, a senator of the British Parliament.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE DEATH OF DR. DOUBTFUL.

SOON after the death of the heroine of this history, Dr. Doubtful departed this world ; he had removed from his farm to a neat house in the more populous part of the forest, and left the wilderness where his farm was situated. Ardent, in collecting information from every source relating to this narrative, rode over to visit the house-keeper of this singular man, who was, perhaps, at no time an estimable character. He may have been considered a heathen philosopher of the last century, and, having lived during those troublesome times of the revolution in France, he was an admirer of Tom Paine and many others, said to have wrote the rights of women, or some such title, in no ways connected, as he ever learned, with Miss Woolstencroft's work. He was one of a junta of worthies who assembled on the banks of the Thames, about twelve miles from London,

and there printed those productions which gave great offence to ministers during those troublesome times. He may have been classed as one of the old school; he had not retired from his farm more than two or three years before death overtook him, and finished his mortal career.

The conversation that passed between this gentleman's late housekeeper and our hero, is now inserted, to fill up the picture of his character, which was slightly sketched in the foregoing part of this narrative. His housekeeper was between the age of forty and fifty years, not ill-looking; she was married, and had one son, of whom the doctor was particularly fond, and, when a little boy, he occasionally dandled him on his knee—when he died, the child was about six years of age. The housekeeper, who was rather an intelligent and communicative woman, gave the following description of the last illness of her late master:—

“ Dr. Doubtful died pretty much as he had lived; you know as well as I, sir, he was a strange man.”

“ I should suppose he was about sixty years of age, or further advanced in life,” said Ardent.

“ Yes, when he died he was sixty-three; his

health was very good, and he was, without exception, the least drinker I ever knew: he could not drink more than one or two glasses of wine at a time."

"Of what nature was his last illness?"

"He was first of all taken with a pain in his side, and he turned as yellow as saffron all over; he would not take any medicine, as he said that was of no use, he could not keep anything upon his stomach, he vomited every thing he ate or drank; he then took opium and brandy, to keep his stomach quiet."

"The very thing he should not have done, but have been bled, physicked, calomelised, put into a warm-bath;—a hundred things might have been done, and all better than the plan he followed. He ought to have carried off the bile as quick as possible," continued Ardent, "before it did mischief to the liver by causing inflammation, or, in all probability, the inflammation preceded the tinge in the skin; at all events, inflammation should have been stopped by the most decisive means, and then he might have lived many years."

The housekeeper shook her head, and said, "Two medical gentlemen called upon him in a

friendly way, but he would do nothing ; said, when his time was come he must go, or go he must, or some such words."

"Then he persisted in his obstinacy to the last?"

"Yes, he would have nothing done; he had no faith in anything, neither in medicine or in spiritual consolation, for our worthy minister called upon him and spoke to him of his worldly affairs; his reply was, 'They are all arranged;' he next touched upon his hopes in the next world, but he would not hear him."

"Did he attend his church?" inquired Ardent.

"Yes, he was tolerably regular; and God rest his soul, for he died in an unhappy state."

"How was the last hour of this unhappy man spent?"

"Very unhappily, sir; he was afraid to be left alone, and so dark was his mind as to the existence of a future state, that he said he should die like a dog, and rot like one, and there would be an end of him. He would then fling himself on the floor in the very madness of torture, as if a vulture was gnawing his liver; his pain was so great, both in body and mind, he would roll and roar on the

floor like one out of his senses. Had he been a bedlamite he could not have uttered more horrid imprecations than he did; whether it proceeded from the pain of his body, or of his mind, or both, I cannot say, but certainly he died in a most dreadful state. Mortification at last seized upon his liver, which spread all over him, and he died as he had lived, in defiance of God and man."

"Profane to the last hour, such was the end of a wilful man," observed Ardent; "I fear he has a long account to settle with the Almighty."

"Even to the last hour he rejected the consolations of religion."

"He may well have been called Doubtful, for as he lived so he died, an infidel complete; a disbeliever in the efficacy of medicine as a healing art, and of religion as useful to society and the world: as a physician, he should have known better, for it is a truth that all well-informed men acknowledge who are not biassed by prejudice, that disease may be frequently prevented from terminating fatally by an early application to the science of the medical and surgical art, which presupposes a knowledge of anatomy and of diseased structure; and, if early means were made use of," said Ardent, "not one

disease in ten would prove fatal. ‘ Prevention is better than cure,’ is what I frequently quoted to Dr. Doubtful and others ; it is an old saying, but a very good one, without being worse for a thousand years’ proof ; and such an axiom, founded on the experience of all ages, will last to the end of time. He was a fatalist, and I am not certain but he was an atheist, or a total unbeliever in God’s providences.”

“ The day before he died,” resumed the house-keeper, “ a friend called upon him, who mentioned his having but just passed the funeral of an old acquaintance, who had been up to Sir Astley Cooper to be cut for the stone ; it was performed, he was a lusty man, and died—his reply was, let him go to—a place I do not think proper to mention, as they had differed in opinion. Upon being told by a clergyman the concern he felt to convince him of the immortality of the spirit after death, he said, there was no occasion to trouble him upon that subject. ‘ If I live till to-morrow,’ he said, ‘ my first year’s annuity becomes due,’ having insured his life at twelve months previous ; he died that night, doubting all things and believing in nothing ; his apprehensions in his last

moments were considerable. He left me and my husband, who were his two servants, £300, the interest for our lives, and the principal afterwards to be our son's, of whom he was exceedingly fond and took great notice."

The chief character that now remains to be spoken of is Captain Racket, with whom some delicacy must be observed, for reasons which need not be here recapitulated; and, as the information is collected from various rumours in circulation, the general outline only can be given, which will be related in the next chapter, depending on the notes to speak of the remaining individuals, as they present themselves to the author's notice.

CHAPTER XXXII.

CAPTAIN RACKET'S afflictions were of that peculiar character as terminated in a temporary derangement, and he was confined in a madhouse to prevent those ill consequences arising from an imprudent marriage, or some other disappointment connected with pecuniary inconveniences; but from these afflictions of mind he is said to have recovered, and I never again heard of a relapse.

This justice is his due,—he had many inoffensive if not good traits of character, and was generally respected by his friends. The unhappy circumstances leading to his mental imbecility were of that extraordinary singularity as will scarce obtain belief; but, if true, Providence, or the fates, or destiny, may fairly be said to have visited him as a retribution, showing what God is capable of bringing about in his own good time, as a mark of his wrath and anger against an

individual who in his earlier days transgressed the holy commandments.

Captain Racket, as confidential reporters have said, was anxious to unite himself in the holy bands of wedlock, some years after the death of the lady, the subject of this history. A friend about this period of time died, and left his widow well provided for, at least about ten thousand pounds. It was a temptation not to be resisted; and, as soon as decency would permit, he paid his addresses to the lady in her weeds, more charming and prepossessing than she had ever before appeared in the lifetime of his friend, with whom he had been intimate for more than twenty years, and which intimacy was one of the strongest of introductions to the weeping fair one; and so he found it. The courtship did not occupy longer time than was absolutely necessary, and immediately the censure of the world could be avoided, they were married and united in the indissoluble banns of wedded life. The honeymoon had not passed over before the husband became a little inquisitive as to the manner in which her property was vested, no doubt wishing to become the

most faithful steward she could appoint to superintend it; and, as foul-mouthed rumour with its brazen throat gives out, it was discussed at the breakfast-table, after an unusual joyous and festive merry-making,—of at least a fortnight's previous introduction and continuance, of banqueting and junketing. Be this as it may, the subject was introduced at the breakfast hour, when all the paraphernalia of the tea equipage was in full exercise, to dispel the fumes of sleep and the fervour of the most devoted love and attachment. The captain began by introducing the subject in as delicate a manner as was possible, lest he might give offence by inquiring too minutely how the property was situated, whether or not it was entirely settled as she wished. “Perfectly so,” was the answer of the lady. Such a ready affirmative led to further disclosures, not quite so salutary to the feelings of the gentleman. The consequence was, as I have been credibly informed, teacups, saucers, teakettle, and all the paraphernalia of morning refreshment, were thrown at each other's heads, like snowballs on a winter's day.

The explanation which had such a skirmishing effect was of this nature: it was perfectly true that eight or ten thousand pounds were left to the widow of his deceased friend; but then he had not lived with her for a great number of years, some have said twenty, but kept a lady concubine in his house as her substitute. They passed as man and wife, she, the lady, assuming the name of her paramour upon all occasions, which led to the unhappy mistake, and he did not learn the full particulars of the different settlements upon the widow and mistress until it was too late to be rectified. The mistress having little left her, depended upon the captain's income, and as it did not then exceed his half-pay, he was completely inconvenienced, and their tempers could not be controlled so far as to put up with a bad bargain, proving, if marriages are registered in heaven, they are contracted upon the earth, and are liable to great errors on both sides, not more so on the part of the men than of the women. This and other calamities of a distressing nature, were too much for the philosophy of human reason to endure, and he felt the shock in that part of his frame most vulnerable and liable to be

affected by mental anxiety. The brain being disorganized, the result was that species of affliction the most unhappy, to which all are liable who do not endeavour to preserve a sound mind in a sound body, by regulating their affairs agreeable to the rules of prudence and wisdom.

CHAPTER XXXII.

CONCLUSION.

THE interval of twenty years had elapsed since Ardent first commenced his entrance into the forest; and he may no longer be considered as the hero of romantic tales, but the relater of serious truths and actual occurrences or events, which in fact should be styled the memoirs of his own life. For this purpose, and to lessen as much as possible the sentiments and language of romance, at the same time allowing himself some poetical imagery, he will present a short description of his feelings as they associated within his mind twenty years after the fatal calamities that drove him from this once happy but since fatal village. To collect his scattered thoughts, he ascended to the summit of one of those lofty hills he had so frequently before described, and there

reviewed the last twenty years of his life, as connected with that period of his history, his first entering the forest, and his retiring therefrom in the fourth year after his entrance into it, including a space of time not exceeding three years and four months, but accompanied with the retrospection of twenty years.

He was now standing on one of the lofty hills forming part of that continent of hills before spoken of, and from which he could discern the valley below, formerly designated the happy, also the villages in the distance, as on a map or large picture.

“ I am now come,” said Ardent, “ to take a farewell of Windsor Forest and its romantic love-scences, bowering shades, and entrancing delusions, for surely they have been so to me ; for what is life but a picture of human wretchedness, anxiety, and misfortunes, with a few prosperous and sunny days to remove the glooms of melancholy and the forebodings of despair. On this elevated hill, far removed from the buzz of men, I can overlook the surrounding country. I am now comparatively in the regions of elevated space, and an associate and companion with the immortal

gods, not of Paradise or of the heavens, but of that intermediate space called mid air, created by the poet's fancy into the regions of immortality. I look around me ; all is vast. I see the distant hills of neighbouring counties lost in the horison ; they have a bloom upon them peculiar to the vapoury ether of distant clouds crowning their lofty summits ; even as the down on the peach, so is our beautiful world pictured and painted as a landscape, with hill and dale, fertile valleys, rural scenery, shepherds with their lasses, as Pope in his inimitable pastorals has so beautifully and so poetically described. Recollections and realities crowd upon me fast, producing a painful and an agreeable association of ideas, incident to those who view the distant landscape of a wild and romantic country from an elevated tower, turret, or other lofty eminence. Here are seen great nature's works, improved and adorned by the hands of man. The Creator of the heavens and the earth has here displayed with glorious magnificence, not the pile of buildings vast, but of hill succeeding hill, and rising in proportioned splendour and sublimity, as mind is exalted above mind, until lost in the vast profound of different

objects endlessly diversified with their pursuits. The scintillations of the air on this bright summer's day dance around me as meteors with unembodied forms, proving themselves not corporeal but ethereal, or as spirits of the earth, dancing their various gambols in mid-air, ere they ascend the lofty sky, to pay adoration in the heavens, the residence of their's and nature's God, who is every where. The luxuriance of the imagination has hitherto propelled me onward to deep meditation on the vast landscape that surrounds me, ere I speak of realities or give my thoughts an embodied form. It is now the heat of a summer's day; hay harvest crowns the landscape in these distant fields, rescued by man from the desolation that existed from the primitive ages of the world, before the ark of Noah floated over hill and marshy plain, standing lake, and whirlpool, for all was ocean then, till the waters again receded, and left the inhabitants of earth dry land.

The sun is in its altitude, and scorched me as I ascended; but now a cloud, as an eagle perched aloft, protects me from the vivid rays of a fiery globe more distinguished than our own, for it is the regulator of many worlds of more refulgence

and glory than earth can pretend a claim to. In yonder park I view a royal duke's domains, an elysium of paradisial beauty, formed of hill and dale and bowery woods, with virtue, true honour, and nobleness of mind for their inmates and occupiers of the soil, diffusing blessings—and therein are blessed. It is from this spot I contemplate the beneficent decrees of the great creator, framer, and founder of the universe, in his various dispensations to the children of men;—fertile in ingenuity as the climate they may have been said to possess from their forefathers, with only this injunction, ‘Remember my commandments, and do unto others as you would they should do to you,’ embodying in a few words the principal tenets of the Old and New Testaments. It is from this eminence I am assisted by the recollections of the past, and also with the presages of future events. Alas! all that concerns mankind in one sense is vanity; all is as nothing, for all is God's, and God's alone, and man is but the dispenser of his will. We are suffered to look on this beautiful world as mere spectators only, journeying through the land as migratory animals or as birds of passage. We see, are seen, and

are then removed, to make room for others as yet unborn ; for they have an equal claim and an equal pretension, as confirmed by the Almighty from the earliest ages of the world to the present time. Such will soon be exemplified in myself : I make but my observations and commentaries on the ways of men, and then give place to others. But I wander from the subject that brought me to this spot ; for every action has its incentive : this moment I am lost in bewildering ideas at my isolated situation, and in conjecture at the busy world around me ; their varied occupations and pursuits, with their dying and their dead ; with the interred and with their hereafter, as is to be and will be. These subjects are worthy of our best contemplative faculties in the calm of meditation, and when free from the gusts of passion, angry feelings, and resentments, whether influenced or repelled by the collision of man with man, or the reverse. But I digress : life itself is digression,—it recedes farther and farther, until it terminates in the grave, the end of all mortality ; for what is born of woman must die, perish as the leaves of the trees, which are renovated by fresh verdure, and human beings by fresh existences,

until neither animal or vegetable life shall be longer in being at the termination of all things created by God's will and pleasure ; for all is his, ever was, and ever will be. I have recently contemplated death in its most awful moments, and within the last hour beheld the sire of a numerous family, a double family—nay, quadrupled. It consisted of no less than fourteen children, and fifty grand-children, in all making a numerous progeny. He was an old acquaintance : it was by an accidental visit I saw his corpse as it lay in the silent closet of a coffin, preparatory to his removal to an adjoining church-yard. I merely called to ask him if he was well, and he was no longer a living man. He had been dead nine days, and is to be buried on the morrow or next day ; such delay is necessary to prepare all the mourning habiliments for so many children and grand-children, who, with his second wife, are the only survivors remaining of a still more numerous progeny : they will all attend his funeral obsequies to the silent grave. The toll of the church bell, the knell or requiem, I fancy I now hear tingling in my ears, vibrating over the valleys beneath my commanding view of the scene below. They are

the last attentions of mortality. May his mortal remains rest within the bowels of the earth, and may his virtues be transmitted to his children, and be reflected by them to the remotest of their posterity. I forbear to particularize those virtues, but doubtless they were, or should have been, numerous, to have diffused among so extensive a race of human beings. The reminiscences of the past crowd on my mind. Is it the restlessness of an active spirit desirous of benefitting others by examples and forewarnings? If so, I hope it will not prove abortive and lost as soon as produced. Twenty years have elapsed since I began to form an association of ideas, while collecting information on the actions, virtues, and delinquencies of mankind. Various have been the dissonance of opinion since I first contemplated beauty accompanied with moral imperfection, so injurious to society and the world. I have endeavoured to display the same in its various meanders, as affecting the prospects and blasting the happiness of social life. An immoral man or woman is an animal poison to be dreaded, as they pollute society by bad examples and destroy the supports to virtue, which are good principles and

wholesome counsel. As a physician to the mind, I have pointed out the diseases, leaving it to the clergy themselves to apply the remedies in proper time and place; for they are, properly speaking, the guardians of morals and the physicians of the soul, and not the scourgers of truth by penance and inconsistency.

Twenty years since, and all was as magic influence with me: it was a luxurious enchantment, while I rode along this continent of hills with her I thought most perfect. Alas! it was imperfection, and the individual who associated such delusions within me is now no more. It is with pity I mentally view her misfortunes, and call her the unfortunate lady. The very mansion she inhabited is seen from this elevated spot, and whose chimneys, like castle turrets, peeping through the trees, assist to picture that part of the verdant landscape reclaimed from the savage wilds that surround it. Recollections, both hallowed and profane, now come over me; for I am still vulnerable to the shafts of beauty's charms, although no longer to be influenced by meretricious love. My sorrows are ready to overwhelm me when I think of the folly of human

nature, that should thus part with its happiness on the brink of a precipice, as did the lady of my former regard. I now look upon her habitation where she resided, and lament I ever became acquainted with her, as it has terminated so dreadfully. Alas! I exclaim, why were you ever the priestess of yon fairy bower, the goddess of enchantment and mystical delusions! the reminiscences of which cannot be recollected without pain, or some of those sympathies inherent in man's nature, who was ever an admirer of the sex. Enough; I came not here to lament, but to portray what yet remains of the once happy valley and the deluding scenes that then surrounded us in the more joyous hours and festive rites; but not of honourable love, for it was profane and unhallowed by religion and virtue, consequently pained a hundredfold more than it yielded pleasure. The happy valley is no more, it exists only in name; I have traversed its path with heartfelt sorrow. The swelling hill, like a bosom to the vale below, formed a descent into it. It was once the boasted retirement of happy lovers, as offering a protection from the scrutiny of vulgar gaze, which may be remembered but can never

be repeated. I feel like a man who has once loved, as the painful experience of the past can testify. It was a delirium of the senses, a delusion, a dream, a phantasy, a magic circle, placed there by a wizard; a necromantic tale, for the phantom of the forest was unknown. Ye that contemplate me, live and learn; nor follow my examples, but my counsel, which is to avoid enigmatical characters as you would the evil spirits of another world, for of such characters are all the fabled tales of legendary romance composed, and this is the truest of them all, for here is no deception.

The unfortunate woman who seduced by her charms the unsuspecting from the paths of rectitude and correct principles, is now no more an inhabitant of this world, neither is the voluptuary who first seduced her from her father's house. They both lay low in earth; the one, perhaps, interred with pomp, splendour, and magnificence, in the family vault, for he was rich and had large possessions; the lady simply with the decency due to humanity. I will now cease my lamentations, and I wish I could say with them my sorrows and misfortunes, for they still partake of the malig-

nancy of the past, and the future presents no hopes but those allowed to courage and a perseverance in well doing, for to perform services to mankind and not receive the merited reward is common. To speak the truth, is to be detested; to act the harlot and the knave is too frequently the way to be respected; for such is the perversity of this world, it lives by deception, and is itself deceived. The once-famed happy valley is no more; it is a ravine, and engenders unsocial ideas. It was not deformed by torrents from the mountains, but by unhallowed hands; the bosom of the hill and soft undulation to the valley below, no longer exist; it has been thrown by pickaxe and shovel into the vale, to make a free egress and regress for carts and waggons and other traffic, beneath an ardent lover's notice, more than that it assists to warm the cotters' habitations by admitting a road through it to bring fuel from the heath, no longer realizing the tale of its fertility, luxuriance, and pasturage for sheep and lambs, but it is now profaned by the clank of jingling chains and harness, the rumbling of waggon-wheels, and the discordant sounds of the wagoner's voice, which shocks the ears of refined

sensibility, the wheels destroying the verdure and pasturage of its simple and unadorned state, which was then peculiarly propitious to the tales of the heart.

Such was once the magic scene of Windsor Forest, and the heroine of this history was the fairy; but now the enchantment is dissolved, the necromancy is at an end, the great unknown is revealed, and, after being the phantom of the forest in the early part of the nineteenth century, at length discovered his cloven foot, and now lies numbered with his ancestral dead.

NOTES.

NOTE 1.

THE Reverend Dr. Allworthy married a lady of fortune, had a second family, and became in every respect an eminent example of moral worth and religious instruction.

NOTE 2.

The Memoirs of Ardent could be continued in many volumes.

NOTE 3.

The lady who went by the name of Mrs. Flowers, was so shocked at even the mitigated punishment of Ardent for speaking truth, that herself and husband left the forest in disgust; the penalty continued to give a triumph to loose principles, and more was said by rumour than we will sully these pages by disclosing.

NOTE 4.

The worthy Mrs. Goodwill of this history, widow of the former rector, lived to a good old age. Twenty years after the eventful period of the narrative, Ardent

called, and found she was still existing, infirm, but resigned to the will of Providence, in daily expectation of that hour which was to number her with the immortals, and which some time after that period arrived.

NOTE 5.

The Reverend Mr. Aimwell still continued the worthy parish priest and rector, also a magistrate for the district; an amiable good man with a large family, diffusing blessings and kindness within the sphere of his ability, and very deservedly respected by his parishioners.

NOTE 6.

The young lady mentioned in part of this history, as a desirable wife for Ardent, married and had a numerous family. Her husband, some years afterwards, while bathing at Gravesend, was overwhelmed in the deep waters, and died. Herself took the accident so much to heart, that it broke down her spirits, and she died, leaving behind her seven children to lament her loss; and this in less than twenty years after the commencement of this history.

NOTE 7.

After having portrayed the character of Rhymer under the appellation of the village Nestor, Ardent set off to pay his friend Rhymer a visit in the forest, for the purpose of hearing his sentiments upon his character, drawn as it was at some length throughout the work; he also took with him a part of the manuscript, to read to the

veteran counsellor and debater upon moral and religious conduct and the duties of general life; but what was his astonishment at learning, on his arrival, that the poet was no more, but lay enshrined in a leaden coffin in his chamber, over which his daughter wept her last adieu. His departure had been sudden, tranquil, and composed, serene as the closing of a summer's evening sky on the distant landscape, until all was obscured by darkness the most profound; after which arose a glimmering twilight in the heavens, and one propitious star shining with mild radiance in the firmament, was hailed by the earthly mourners as the immortal soul of their late worthy, intelligent, and intellectual friend, which had arrived full of honour and glory at its merited destination.

“ From this friend, then,” said Ardent, “ I have no more to expect, either in the form of counsel, or benefit derived from his experience of the past or insight into the future. His last moments arrived suddenly and unexpected, showing the termination of a good man's mortal career, which we now insert.

He played at cards with a few friends on the evening previous, and won his last rubber; but, during the contest for the game, he said to a young lady near him, “ What noise is that I hear? it was as if something had given way in my head.” One of the company remarked, that it might have been only an imaginary or accidental circumstance; to which he replied, “ I am not quite so well as I appear.” Notwithstanding which observation, he played the game out, and won it. Alas, reader! it was the going down of his clock of life; it unwound

itself at that moment ; the weights of existence, exceeding three-score years and ten, had passed their boundary, and the Almighty numbered him with the immortals. On the following morning his daughter, an amiable married lady, called at his chamber, at seven o'clock, to learn how he had passed the night, to which his reply was, " Tolerably well ; I will take my breakfast in bed, and get up afterwards." While breakfast was preparing, death terminated his existence in a quiet and composed manner.

NOTE 8.

The counterpart of our friend, Rhymer, is the village astronomer, mathematician, and astrologer, who is known to the reader under the name of Foresight in these memoirs. He was, to make use of his own words, getting an old man ; having passed his grand climacteric, his faculties, feelings, and sensibilities, appeared to have become in some degree obtuse,—perhaps, as nearly resembling vegetable as animal life. As he had never experienced the fervour of mind or the vivid energy of Ardent, he was different from him in most things, and, eventually, became a cool calculator of loss and gain ; notwithstanding which he still remains the worthy good man he always was, and may his days be happier as his existence draws nearer to its close.

NOTE 9.

Lawyer Rapine is also closing his mortal career, and, lest more should be said than impartiality would justify,

it is merely remarked, he is a senseless mass of imperfections, paralyzed, and without articulate utterance; disorganization is now seizing fast hold of those morbid parts peculiar to vice and intemperance, producing an old age of misery, decrepitude, and misfortune, despised by most men and respected by none.

NOTE 10.

The bully of this history continued his character, and gradually undermined that health Divine Providence had favoured him with, while his wife continues a blessing to her children and respected by the good.

NOTE 11.

The country banker mentioned in this history brought an action for *crim. con.* against his apprentice, and obtained 100*l.* damages. The inveigling the miller into a purchase of the large property he had to sell, at 3000*l.* advantage to himself, was attended with a lawsuit, which effectually put the purchase aside, and the banker was rewarded by an imprisonment of six months in Newgate, for the fraudulent act of entrapping the miller to become a purchaser of his 20,000*l.* prize.

NOTE 12.

Ardent, in his successful lawsuit, paid his own expenses, not requiring them to be discharged by the plaintiff.

NOTE 13.

There are many witnesses now living who can attest the flogging.

NOTE 14.

The house and grounds belonging to Mrs. Freelove, the heroine of this history, had been purchased from one of the Butler family, a natural descendant of the great Duke of Ormond, the friend of Dryden, and the companion, in exile, of Charles the Second, and after his restoration.

NOTE 15.

Joseph Patter, or Batter, of the village green, became a mendicant, and sold matches for bread; he was seen with a wife and child in a forlorn state, recollecting his joyous days with a sigh; and this man of matchless or matchful perfections, in the inverse ratio of agreeable, remains a surviving proof of the garbage of licentiousness, and the extent to which the immoral principle can descend.

NOTE 16.

Young Freelove died at a premature age, not exceeding the half of the life of man, and his widow was left in the most indigent circumstances from his improvidence. This was discovered by her application to a friend of the deceased, to enable her to reach her friends in the country.

NOTE 17.

This history commences with the 12th of March, 1808, the date of Ardent's entering the forest, as a young man unacquainted with the world.

NOTE 18.

The bog in which Ardent's horse was swamped, was on the right side of the great western road, leading from London, and seen distinctly on the left as the traveller descends from the Golden Farmer's Hill.

NOTE 19.

The incidents recorded in these volumes took place previous to the inclosure of the forest, and during its savage wildness; affording a scope for adventure not unworthy the pen of the historian of the transactions to narrate, imparting an interest to wilds which heretofore had been associated with banditti, and not to the softer passion of love.

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